

# NUTLEY UNICO

(*nutleyunico.org*)

## AUGUST/SEPT 2022 NEWSLETTER

### September Dinner Meeting

Our first dinner meeting of the year will be Thursday, Sept. 8, at 7:00 pm at Mama Vittorio. This will be the initial meeting under our new President, Dan Carnicella. *Buona Fortuna* Dan.

If you have not yet paid your 2022-23 dues please remit asap, or bring to the Sept. meeting.

Congratulations to Marie Solimo who was selected as the Most Outstanding District Governor in the country at the national convention.

The Nutley Chapter finished second in the ranking for the Most Outstanding Chapter in the country. Congratulations everyone!!

### Executive Committee

The committee met on August 18.

- National Business
  - UNICO National Bocce Tournament for Cancer Research in Montville on Sept. 11.
  - Meet the National President Night at the Venetian, Garfield on Wednesday, Oct 26.
  - UNICO National Convention in 2023 will be in Sanibel Harbor Marriot Resort & Spa in Fort Meyers, Florida, Wednesday, July 26 through Sunday, July 30.
- District VII Business
  - Marie Solimo passed the Governor's gavel to Anna Marie Latushko.
- Chapter Business
  - Activity Report for the Christmas Eve in July was approved. Thanks to the great work by Danny & Cathy Marucci not only did everyone have a great time, but the event earned a profit of \$2,221 after expenses.
  - Cathy Marucci reported on membership. We currently have 165 members, but only 63 paid as of Aug. 18.
  - Sal Ferraro is finalizing the 2022-23 budget. It will be presented prior to the October meeting for approval.
  - Sal and Tom Sposato reported that the golf outing would be sold out. We wound up having 80 golfers. A fiscal report will follow.
  - Old Business – The revised by-laws still have to be reviewed and edited by the executive committee before submitting to the membership.
  - The AC bus trip turned a profit of \$410. Great job by Frank Russo.

- The Italian Classes taught by Chiara Russeniello was well attended. Chiara dedicated the \$900 in registration back to the Chapter. The Executive Committee voted to present Chiara with a \$300 check to the charity/program of her choice.
- The Executive Committee recommended that we make a push for more participation in chapter committees. We hope to provide a list at the next meeting. If you have a particular interest please inform the president, Dan Carnicella, who will be naming the committee chairs.

### Upcoming Events

- **Sept. 8** Dinner Meeting
- Checks for local donations will be presented at the Sept. meeting.
- Tuesday, **Sept. 21** – Nutley-Belleville Columbus Day Parade Dinner.
- Thursday, **Oct. 6** – Oct. dinner meeting
- Sunday, **Oct. 9** – Nutley-Belleville Columbus Day Parade preceded by the Nutley UNICO Columbus ceremony at the statue in front of Nutley Town Hall. Details to follow.
- Sunday, **Oct. 10** – NY Columbus Day Parade
- Thursday, **Nov. 3** – November dinner meeting. This is dedicated to veterans of the military service.
- Tuesday, **Dec. 13** – Nutley UNICO Christmas Party at Nanina’s in the Park. There is no dinner meeting in December.

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### 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, I recently 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.

## 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 Fourteen** **"Racial Hatred"**

*Not many years ago some narrow-minded people took exceptional delight in besmirching an Italian when the opportunity presented itself. An Italian was usually prejudged. We have been tolerant enough and have tolerated it long enough.*

*Our boys have always answered the call to defend their country. Many never came back. If some of our boys have taken the wrong road, the percentage is small considering the many millions of Italian-Americans there are in this country. How many races can say more?*

*Laying politics aside, Woodrow Wilson, in his 'History of the American People' wrote, 'The people of southern Europe are less desirable as immigrants than the Chinese'. Here in Newark the vast majority of Italians are from southern Europe. When he wrote his history he never dreamed that some day he would welcome the votes of those from southern Europe.*

*After we entered WWI, Mr. Charles Gillen, who was the mayor of Newark at the time, stood on a platform. He made a pleas for volunteers and he had hardly finished when a boy of about 18 in broken English yelled, 'me go, me go'. He fought his way to the platform and pleaded, 'Mister, me go'. He had put to shame many others by being the first to answer the call. Yes, the boy was from Southern Italy. One of Mr. Wilson's undesirable immigrants, and there were thousands like him.*

### **Chapter Fifteen** **"The Padrone System or Clique"**

*Much had been written about that band of disgraceful, unprincipled human leeches who lived by blood money extracted from their fellow countrymen who, unsuspecting of any wrong, were prey to the devilish clique. Those so-called 'Padroni' (bosses) flourished in NY, Pennsylvania and later came to Newark in the late 1870s. They had a systematic plan to lure victims by intriguing them. (This is not hearsay. I was a witness to most of their wrongdoings and the ultimate results).*

*They would wait at the old Castle Garden or The Battery (later known as the Aquarium). They would pretend to be waiting for someone. He would say, 'I am surprised you work for only ninety-five cents a day....where I am the foreman the men get one dollar and twenty-five cents a day and free lodging. He told the men that he could use twenty or thirty of them. 'It would be easy work', he said, 'laying down wood ties for the tracks'. But all the men saw when they went to work were empty freight cars with wooden benches to sit on, straw on the floor to sleep on, a table, some cooking pots and pans, some plates and a small cheap kitchen stove. The padrone had a special car in which he had groceries and liquor that he sold at his price. On payday the paymaster would count the men and give the money to the padrone. He first would take two dollars from each man as his share for getting them the job. Next he would take money for the food they had bought. The men had little left. The men spoke no English, and the padrone always had a revolver hanging in his holster on his belt. The conductor of the depot began*

*to get wise to the padrone. One day when the padrone went to his car there were two men in there. He reached for his revolver, but the conductor grabbed it. The padrone said, 'me do nothing wrong'. But the conductor said, 'you sold beer without a license and opened people's mail'. The padrone was arrested. On the day of the arrest, Pietro Puglia, Gaetano Gauiose and I were in the padrone's living car. I went as an interpreter. It was later discovered that they were a well-organized band of fugitives from Italy and Austria who operated in many state here. They were all deported in the custody of Italian police.*

**Chapter Sixteen**  
"The Blizzard of 1888"

*There has been much written about which was worse, the blizzard of March 12, 1888, or the one a few years later. I just think anyone who was in both should know best.*

*The Sunday before the blizzard had been a nice day. During the night a very strong wind was blowing. My father knew that there was no food in the house. He thought of going to Vallentino's Bakery for cheese and salami. He did not know that the wind we heard was that of a blizzard. He went downstairs, opened the door but was unable to shut it due to the bulk of snow on the porch. From the second floor all he could see was snow on the roof that covered the entire window.*

*Hahne & Co. was located between New and West Park Streets. The snow was blowing across the park and the street made a very high pile in front of the store, so the storekeepers dug a tunnel to the door. All the following day the snow kept falling and the wind was blowing like a gale. Many of the Italians were willing to work and earn more money than they had ever made before. They went to shovel snow for the merchants and to clear the railroad tracks. Some made as much as four and five dollars. They worked as long as there was light.*

**Chapter Seventeen**  
"The Second Italian Colony of Newark, NJ"

*The second colony, like that of the first, had its beginning in 1873. It was started by two partners that had a small junk business in a basement on Crosby St in NY City. They were Giuseppe Capauana and Arsenio Costa from Sala Consilina, Salerno. They and Giovanni Franchi and my father had become good friends since 1872. They heard father praise Newark and decided to come and see. When they came, they liked Newark. They did not see the poverty they saw in NY. After not being able to find a suitable place in the old 15<sup>th</sup> ward (now the first ward), they found one on River St. It was the start of the second colony.*

*To be continued.....*

F. Cocchiola

Please forward any changes in email addresses, good & welfare items, questions for the Executive Committee or questions concerning the newsletter to me at [fcoch@aol.com](mailto:fcoch@aol.com) (Frank Cocchiola)

