**NUTLEY UNICO**

***(nutleyunico.org)***

**MARCH 2023 NEWSLETTER**

**OUR NEXT DINNER MEETING IS THURSDAY, APRIL 6, AT 7:00 pm AT MAMMA VITTORIA.**

**March Dinner Meeting**

There were two highlights of the March dinner meeting. The first was the excellent menu everyone enjoyed. The second was the “Italian Jeopardy” game hosted by Danny Marucci with assistance from Jerry Del Tufo, Alan Genitempo and Cathy Marucci. Categories included Sicily, Rome, Italian actresses, Al Pacino movies, NY Yankees, “Who said it” from the Godfather, Pasta, Italian singers, Italian politicians, Italian athletes and Italian tourist sites. The competition was hot and heavy with the room split into three screaming sections represented by one poor guy/woman per group. Looked like a tie to me. Great job!

Thanks to all who participated in the St. Patrick’s Day Parade.

**Good & Welfare**

Congratulations to Dr. Alan and Robin Genitempo on the birth of their first child, a little girl, Gemma Clare, on March 8. The proud grandparents are Alan and JoAnne Genitempo.

John Kelly III and Frank Turano will be honored by the Jaycees at the annual event on April 13. It will be held at the Valley Regency. Tickets are $55.

**Upcoming Events**

April 6th dinner meeting – We will be awarding the first three of our Unico Academic Scholarships. The Unican of the Year will be announced.

May 4th – Dinner meeting. The Unican of the Year Award will be awarded, and additional scholarships will be presented.

May 21 – Chapter Brian Piccolo Scholarship Breakfast, 9:00 am at the Chandelier, Belleville. We are soliciting baskets and gifts for our tricky tray event.

June 1st – Dinner Meeting. Additional scholarships will be presented at this meeting.

June 16 – Corn Hole Competition (Pizza & Beer) – Details to follow.

**Executive Committee**

The committee met on March 16.

* National Business

--Mid-Year Board Meeting is scheduled for March 24-26 at the Embassy Suites in Alexandria, Va. (Phyllis Coldebella, Marie Solimo and Dan Carnicella plan on attending)

* District VII Business

--District VII Recognition Dinner will be hosted by our chapter on May 23. It will be held at Nanina’s. Tickets are $80. Past President and 2022 District Governor, Marie Solimo, will be recognized at this dinner.

-District VII Brian Piccolo Awards Dinner will be held on March 28 at the Graycliff in Moonachie. Our recipient is Brandon Lucia.

-Lodi Unico Comedy Night – March 24, 7:30 – 10:30 at “Make Wine With Us”, 21 Curie Ave., Wallington. Tickets are $40. If interested call Mike at 973-340-9804).

-Garfield Unico “Pocket Book” Tricky Tray. Friday, May 12th, doors open at 6:30 pm. At Boys & Girls Club of Clifton, 822 Clinton Ave., Clifton. $35 per person.

-Saddle Brook Unico Bingo Night – Friday, April 21. Doors open at 6:00 with first game at 7:00. American Legion Post 147, 1 Legion Pl., Elmwood Park. If interested contact Jerry Taylor (201-522-3790)

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* Chapter Business
* **Our next dinner meeting is Thursday, April 9, at 7:00 pm at Mamma Vittoria’s**.
* Forms were distributed at the Feb. meeting for nominations for the 2023 Unican of the Year and Lifetime Achievement recipients. Selections will be announced.
* Cathy Marucci reported that we now have 176 members.
* Donations

An ad will be placed in the Jaycees Ad Journal for their annual event on April 13. Two of our members, Frank Turano and John Kelly III, are being honored.

We will provide Lunch gift cards to students participating in the NHS Government Day on April 13.

A $100 donation was made to the Federation of Italian Americans in NJ.

* **BRIAN PICCOLO SCHOARSHIP BREAKFAST -**

**Our annual Brian Piccolo Scholarship Breakfast will be held at the Chandelier, Belleville, at 9:00 am on Sunday, May 21.** Our guest speaker will be Channel 5 Sports personality, Tina Cervasio. Tickets to this event will be $35. Seven to eight scholarships will be awarded that morning. Members are encouraged to attend.

We need baskets or individual items for our **“Tricky Tray”** that morning. You can contact me or Marie Solimo.

* A Cornhole Tournament is planned for June 16.

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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 tilted, *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 Thirty-Four***

*“Mt. Pleasant Ave. Area”*

*The Crittendern home on Ogden St at the Mt. Pleasant Cemetery is an old landmark. It was there in the 1870s. The Foster home on Broadway is another old landmark. It was there in 1873 when we arrived. The Newark Normal School is now on what was a small farm, extending from Summer Ave. to Kearny across the Passaic River. An Italian, Alfonso Cassiere, had a small farm from Summer Ave to Broadway as late as 1925.*

*“A Terrible Tragedy”*

*On Feb. 19th, 1903 at the Clifton Ave Railroad crossing of the Lackawanna RR a trolly full of children going to Barringer HS crashed through the gates. An eastward bound train hit the trolley causing nine high school pupils to be killed. Tragedies could have been avoided had the tracks been depressed or elevated. (They were depressed later)*

***Chapter Thirty-Five***

*“Newark South of Central Ave. and East from Orange St to Passaic River”*

*The early fathers used good judgement when they made Broad St and gave it that name. For years it was thought to be the broadest street in the country. The four corners, Broad and Market Streets were for years known as the busiest corners in the United States. Winter or summer, day or night, there were and still are people there twenty four hours a day.*

*Central Ave. & Center St. – On Center St from Broad St to Park Pl are some of the finest homes, equal to Fifth Ave in NY City. The little triangle park, Doune’s Park, was there and so was the church in Military Park, which was by will left to the people of Newark The statues of General Philip Kearny and Frelinghuysen were there, where the monument Wars of America is now. The models for the Wars of America were made in the US and sent to Italy where they were cast in bronze and came to Newark in sections and assembled in the park.*

*The park on the Broad St side was used a few days a week by truck farmers who came from nearby farms. They lined up at the curb. They paid a small amount to the city for rent. They were not permitted to take anything back. That was a good thing for the poor people who went there near closing to buy vegetables and fruit very cheaply.*

*One small store was opened between New St and West Park St. From that store it grew by joining store after store and removing the partitions. It became like one big store. The Italian women called it ‘The Cent Cent Store’ because on Mondays the store sold remnants for three cents a yard. On the northwest corner of West Park St was Hartegen Jewelry Store, with a big clock at the curb. Straus’ Dry Goods Store was on the opposite corner.*

*Around the corner on West Park St in the middle 80s a modern theater was build called the Park Theater. I saw good dramas there. It was later used as the Newark Public Library until the present library was opened. The old library was used as a Turkish bath owned by Harry Hymes who also owned the old Empire Theater on the site of the present Bamberger’s building. On Broad St at the Canal (now Raymond Boulevard) was Plaut’s Dept Store, better known as ‘The Bee Hive’.*

*Where the Public Service building is on Park Pl was the Park House where the elite that came to Newark stopped.*

*In 1884, an Italian lady said to be the seventh daughter of a seventh daughter, looked like Cleopatra waiting for Mark Anthony. She was dressed like a queen. She had a wagon like one in a circus parade. In the front, it had a dentist’s chair. She did free extractions. The extractions were free but she also sold a small bottle of green medicine, a cure all. The medicine was analyzed and found to be nothing more than a temporary remover for pain. The faker was ordered to leave the city.*

*The bronze canon that is in the park is a trophy of the Spanish-American war taken in Cuba and loaned to the city by the US Government.*

*“The Old Center Market”*

*The Old Center Market was on the side of Broad St built over the Morris Canal. A one-story building, with two stories at Broad St. The second floor was used by the Newark Board of Health for free examinations and medicine, and free extraction of teeth. The market sold eggs, butter and all kinds of meat, except fowl. The market extended from Broad St to Mulberry St and built over the Canal. Mr. Gallante, Mayor Villani’s father-in-law, was the first Italian to have a booth for the sale of fruit in the annex.*

*“Fourth of July”*

*Fourth of July was waited for all year by children and adults. Early in the morning shots were fired from a cannon in the park. Within the enclosed ropes frames were set up for the pyrotechnics display at night. As the old 19th century passed and the 20th came in, the old was of celebrating the Furth of July changed. This was for the best since many young people had been injured and there were many fires in the homes.*

*What was ‘the Canal’ and North Canal St is now Raymond Boulevard.*

*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 (Frank Cocchiola)