

NUTLEY UNICO

(*nutleyunico.org*)

SEPT./OCT. 2022 NEWSLETTER

September Dinner Meeting

President Dan Carnicella kicked off the new year by installing 9 new members and distributing donations to local charities. The new members are Sal Fiordillo, Giovanni Crocco, Nick Chipelo, Michael Beck Jr., Adrianna Argenziano, Randy Matlosz, John Panzera, Nick Russo and Dominick Vaccarezza.

The local charities are Rutgers Cancer Institute of NJ (Prostate Cancer), Nutley Family Service Bureau, Multiple Sclerosis, Cerebral Palsy Center, Scarpelli Assoc. (Autism), Nutley Thriving Survivors, Nutley Little Theatre and the Nutley Public Library.

It was reported that the Christmas Eve in July event earned a profit of \$2,221, The Golf Outing netted over \$6,000. Thanks to the Marucci's and Tom Sposato & Sal Ferraro.

Chapter committee sign sheets were provided for anyone interested. Thank you to those who expressed an interest in a committee.

District Gov., Annamarie Latushko, was in attendance and addressed the group.

Good & Welfare

- Congratulations to Barry & Sally Maurillo on their son Dominick's wedding to Gabrielle Margiotta on Sept. 10, and to Sal & Donna Cocco, whose son Daniel married Rebecca Cozzarelli on Sept. 17.
- Frank Russo's daughter, Danielle Russo Cohen, and husband Joey, welcomed a baby girl, Eleanor, to the family on Sept. 24. She weighed 7 lb, 5 oz.
- Tom Tucci retired from the position of Town Manager in Cedar Grove after many successful years of community leadership in August. Enjoy!
- Steve Picciano is successfully recovering from cardiac and back surgery.

Executive Committee

The committee met on Sept. 20.

- National Business
 - The UNICO National Bocce Tournament for Cancer Research was held in Montville on Sept. 11. Tom Sposato and Dan Carnicella entered a team in the event.
 - 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
 - On Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 1 & 2, the Waterbury, Ct. chapter will celebrate “The Birthplace of UNICO” at its 100th Anniversary at the Courtyard Marriot in Waterbury.

- Chapter Business
 - Committee chairs will be reaching out to those who signed up for committee work.
 - New applicants, Rosie Barbosa, Maryann Pomponia and Joseph Battaglia, were discussed and will be presented for membership. Youth member David Ervolino will also be sworn in.
 - Cathy Marucci reported that membership is now at 172 members.
 - The 2022-23 budget was approved and was sent to all members as an attachment with this newsletter. A vote will be taken at the October 6 meeting.
 - The revised Chapter by-laws were approved by the committee and will also be attached to the email with the newsletter. Discussion and subsequent approval will take place at the Oct. meeting. Thanks to Andy Garruto for chairing the ad-hoc committee and members Marie Solimo and Frank Cocchiola.
 - 2022-23 calendar:
 - Oct. 6, Nov. 3 – Dinner meeting
 - Dec. 13 – Christmas Party (no regular meeting)
 - Jan. 5 – Dinner Meeting
 - Feb. meeting – Date to be determined (At Nanina’s)
 - March 2, April 6, May 4, June 1 – Dinner Meetings

If you have not paid your 2022-23 dues please do so asap. It can be mailed to Nutley Unico, PO Box 43, Nutley, brought to a meeting or passed on to any executive committee member.

Upcoming Events

- Sunday, **Oct. 9** – Nutley-Belleville Columbus Day Parade (1:00 line up at Belleville HS) preceded by the Nutley UNICO Columbus Wreath-Laying ceremony (11:00 am) at the Columbus statue in front of Nutley Town Hall.
- 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.

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 Seventeen

*"Ready for Business, but with whom?"
(The River Street Fight)*

One or two of our partners would go to NY as rag pickers, but they had been attacked by the Irish rag pickers who had been there for years. The Frenchmen around William and Halsey Sts. were willing to sell to Italians, but the Irish were assisted by a bad lot of bums and thugs that hung at a dive on Commerce St near River St, a cheap beer salon known as the Tub of Blood. Many of them were known as 'Keg Drainers' because they could drain a mug of beer out of the stale beer left in the keg.

People who knew the neighborhood did not dare to pass the canal after dark. But the Italians kept coming to River St. In spite of all the trouble there were a number of Italian families that began to take possession of houses on North and South Canal streets.

The influx of Italians who came to that section of the city was getting beyond the control of the thugs. So they got help from the Warren St. Gang. They were plenty tough. When they saw you it was, 'either give me the price of a pint or get a ducking in the canal'. When the Italians got wind of this they went to NY and came back with forty or more husky Italians, all armed with long iron pokers and knives. These men were mostly from the "Five Points", a section including Mulberry St. They had the same trouble there. The leader was known as 'Il Brigante' (the bandit). He had tiger-like eyes and a heart of gold.

The next day was spent mapping out the plan of action. 'Il Brigante' laid out the plan. He had 4 volunteers come from Market St past the Tub of Blood. They had to be fast runners. The other men hid on South Canal St, and others in halls.

About 10:00 in the morning the Italians came running and yelling but made no attempt to fight. The hoodlums chased them. In the meantime the women had tied ropes on stoops and poles. They held them and pulled them as the ruffians came by, tripping them. Then they hit them with sticks on the legs making

it hard for them to run. The men did the rest. After the battle was over the Black Maria, a police wagon, made a number of trips to the police Station on William St. Ambulances were kept busy. No one was killed and no Italian was hurt. The Italians were arrested then released in the custody of police Captain William Corbitt who was Irish and a resident of the community. He was pleased to see that gang disappear. But the Tub of Blood remained into the early 90's and perhaps still later.

Before the battle of the canal the wholesaler buyers of junk were afraid to buy from the Italians due to the Irish boycott. Then the first to buy was Walsh & Sons, then on Washington St. They bought scrap metal. Samuel & Sons, buyers of waste paper and rags, bought all the Italians had to sell. They were on Market St., opposite Beaver St.

Captain Corbett later became Chief Corbitt, and in a conversation he said, 'Do you remember the fight on River St.'. I said I heard about it but was only a small boy and all I know is what I heard. Then he told me all that had been written of the fight. The chief was of a pleasant disposition with a twinkle in his eye. He said that after the fight the Judge told him that, 'A handful of Italians cleaned up what you and all your police were not able to do'. Some years later the chief died while riding on his horse leading a parade.

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)