

NUTLEY UNICO
(nutleyunico.org)
Feb. 2022 NEWSLETTER

Next Dinner Meeting
Thursday, March 3, 2022, 7:00 pm
at
Mama Vittoria

February Meeting

- The highlight of the February meeting was the drawing of the winners of the annual raffle. Winners were Phil Graffeo (1st prize-\$9,000), Jim DeLorenzo (2nd prize-\$3,000), Nella Cicchino (3rd prize-\$2,500), Anthony DePersio (4th prize-\$2,000) and L. Petish (5th prize-\$1,000). In attendance and assisting with drawing the winning ticket numbers was national President, Steve Pelonero and his wife Pat.
- Thanks to Sal Ferraro, Mark DiMaggio and Tom Sposato for coordinating the annual raffle, and thanks to all who participated by purchasing and/or selling tickets. It was a complete sell out! These funds will help us in funding our annual scholarships.
- Guest speaker was Billy Walsh who spoke about the history of the NJ State Troopers. The presentation was informative and interesting. Thank you, Billy.

Culture & Heritage

Dan Marrucci will celebrate our culture and heritage with a special Italian “The Price is Right” game at the March meeting. (*Costumes are not required.*)

An additional Culture & Heritage item will be found at the end of this newsletter.

Good & Welfare

- We all continue to keep the Tolve family in our prayers following the recent loss of Gerard Tolve Jr.
- Steve Picciano is at home recovering from a recent surgery.
- Alan Genitempo was appointed as the new Municipal Judge. Congrats.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee met on Tuesday, Feb 22. Among the items discussed were:

- Unico National News
National Scholarship applications are available on line until April 15. This includes scholarships for undergraduate studies and graduate school.

The Unico National Convention is scheduled for Wednesday, July 27 – Sunday, July 31, at the Omni Royal in New Orleans.

- District News (The District Governor is our Past President Marie Solimo).
The next District VII meeting is Tuesday, March 22.

Our District assessment is \$300.

The District VII Piccolo Dinner is Tuesday, April 5, at the Greycliff, Moonachie. The Piccolo Committee is reviewing candidates for this award and our annual Piccolo Scholarship. An announcement will be made soon.

- Local Chapter Business

The **annual budget** will soon be provided to all members, with a vote for approval scheduled for the March meeting. One item that has been changed is the expenditure for the annual National Convention. The appropriation has been increased from \$2,000 to \$2,555. This figure represents the maximum amount to be used in the unlikely event that all of the 7 Executive Committee members were to attend the convention. It would cover only the registration fee of \$365. Payment would be made directly to Unico National for each attendee. This would not include any member who is also a District or National officer. Each attendee would be responsible for all travel, hotel, food, etc. expenses.

An ad in the Irish American Club Program Journal was approved previously for \$100.

The annual expenditures for sponsorship of a Nutley American Little League team (\$300) and Nutley LL East farm league team (\$250) were approved.

Please do not forget to submit recommendations for the **chapter's annual awards** (Unican of the Year and Lifetime Achievement). Forms were sent to you previously. The committee will make recommendations at the March meeting.

The Nominating Committee will be convening soon to discuss a slate of officers for 2022-23.

Recognition for members who have been in our chapter for 25, 30, 35, 40, 45 and 50 years will be included in our April 7 meeting.

The Conversational Italian classes program is moving forward. Dates will soon be determined. The program will be for 6-8 weeks in the evening at one of the district schools. Thanks to Chiara Russeniello for volunteering to instruct this program. All fees will be donated back to the chapter.

Plans are in the works for the annual bus ride to AC also. Details to follow.

Upcoming Events

- March 3 – Monthly dinner meeting.
- March 5 (Saturday) – **St. Patrick Day Parade**. Members will meet at the corner of the old Holy Family church at 12:30 pm.
- March 17 – Next Executive Committee meeting.
- April 5 – District VII Piccolo Dinner.
- April 7 – Chapter dinner meeting. We will be present our Chapter Award winners and the three major chapter scholarships (\$4,000, \$3,000 and \$2,000) at this meeting.
- May 5 – Chapter dinner meeting
- May 15 (Sunday) – Chapter **Brian Piccolo Scholarship Breakfast** at the Chandelier at 9:00 am. Male & Female Piccolo Scholarships will be presented along with approximately 8 additional scholarships. **SAVE THE DATE**. We are soliciting gifts/baskets to raffle off at this event. Please notify Marie Solimo or me if you have any items.

CULTURE & HERITAGE

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. Virginus 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 gave a copy to the Nutley Public Library to place in the Unico section, but want to provide you with some interesting sections of the manuscript. I will start with Pietro's own words as to why he was writing this.

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.

I wrote about the trouble single men had to get married; the old weddings; the first child to die; the origin of 'poste' at funerals; and the fights with the Irish bums on River Street. In this history I give more details of that fight as told to me later by the late police chief, Michael Corbitt, who was captain at that timeand what changes the Italians made in the 'colonies' to better living conditions.

In this history I describe all points of interest of our city.... the 'Padrone System' and how it operated; why so many Italians came to the U.S. and why they came here from New York; and how the Panic of 1873 contributed to the growth of the 'colonies'.....the progress and accomplishments of our people;..... how Italians became affiliated with either of the two major political parties and how they became citizens; the first Italian name on a ticket; the dirty deal we got and how we retaliated, with interest.

I hope that this will answer any question in regard to the early settlers. It should convince the most skeptical as to whether or not my father was or was not the first to start an Italian 'colony' in Newark.

An Autobiographical Sketch of Myself

I was born in a small mountain town of Calabritto, province of Avellino, on April 22, 1869, of humble parents. My parents were Angelo Maria Mattia and Filomena (Ilaria) Mattia....My father was a board sawyer by trade, sawing board from trees by hand. His trade was of no use in this country where it was done by machinery. So, he worked as a woodchooper.

My father came to NY in 1872 and to Newark in 1873. He sent for us and we sailed from Naples on Aug. 29, 1873. When only a few days from NY our ship was wrecked. After being on a raft for three days we were picked up and brought back to Liverpool, England. A few weeks later, we took sail again for NY. We arrived here on Dec. 4 1873.

I was three years and four months old, and I was always with my mother and had no contact with English-speaking people.I entered the State St. School which I attended for only a few months. Due to punishment I got from a heartless teacher, Miss Brookfield, I left school. A few years later I had school. I, like most boys of the time, became a bootblack, and a very poor one for I never liked it.

After about a year, my parents wanted me to learn tailoring. Around a year later, I had had enough of that....My father was truly disgusted.....One time he gave me a piece of paper and said, 'Can you draw a picture of a pick and shovel'.. 'I'll try', I said. I did and he looked at it. 'Very, very good. That's what you use to make a living. Now go and learn what you like, but remember that I am not spending any money on crazy ideas. You have a home, but as far as buying clothes or paying for anything else, no!'

More to come later.

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)

