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LICS Trips Return - Page 2
LICS Picnic - September 12, 2021

*The Newsletter of the
Lancaster Italian Cultural Society*

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L'Osservatore Lancastriano



Regata Storica in Venice by Mary Cae Williams

One of Italy's many delights is its festivals (feste) and special holidays. Some are so old that they date back to the Roman Empire and, perhaps, even earlier. Some take their origins from more recent times. Often it is a bit unclear exactly when a particular festival began. Part of the delight of these festivals, in fact, is the elements of myth and legend that surround some of them.

The Regata Storica in Venice, held the first Sunday in September, embodies both the ancient and more modern traditions. The earliest record of such a regatta comes from the mid-13th century and was part of the "Festa delle Marie" (Festival of the Marias...there are twelve) celebrations. Since Venice is a city built on water, however, it is likely that some types of regattas were practiced long before that. The regatta is a celebration of the skills of rowers and all transportation in the city of Venice was dependent on these rowers. Rowers racing give those skills an exciting and very public expression of their excellence.

Today's Regata Storica (Historical Regatta) includes both the excitement of race competition and the commemoration of a grand parade. The races include all kinds of boats and groups are broken down by age and expertise. One group includes children under 10. Another group is for women only. And, of course, there is a race for the greatest champions of rowing. This most elite level

of the regatta is for the two-oar gondolini. These boats, much like gondolas but built on a lighter model, are designed to showcase the technical qualities of the rowers. The champions have emerged from a series of race events stretching back over the months leading up to this final regatta.

All the races follow the same route along the Canal Grande. The races may vary in length but they all end up opposite an impressive, floating stage next to Ca' Foscari (one of Venice's famous palaces.)

Before the races begin, however, the city and its thousands of visitors from around the world are treated to an amazing display of historical vessels parading down the Canal Grande. Bissone are boats adorned with precious materials called bissi. The Bucentaur was the state barge of the powerful and glamorous doges of Venice. The many boats of the Venice Society of Venetian Rowing add to the panorama. All this is to commemorate La Serenissima, the Most Serene Republic of Venice, in the days when it was one of the most powerful forces in the Mediterranean, dominating trade between Europe and North Africa, as well as with Asia.

The Regata Storica brings the season of rowing competitions to a close until they begin again in April. Words can barely convey the opulence, the beauty, and the magnificence of this festival. For a peek at all this extravagance check out the following website: regatastoricavenezia.it. Or simply put "regata storica 2020 photos" in your search and enjoy the fabulous photos.

LICS Newest Members - Welcome to our family!

Patrick Castagna, Charlotte Compton,
Gus Flichia, Christopher Hubbs,
Timothy Liddell, Laura McNeill,
Jane Pugliese, Robert Rettig,
Joseph D. Roda, Jr., Elizabeth Smoot,
Anthony Tomei, and Steve Weaver



President's Message

Ciao Membri,

Our FaceBook page is up and running, so please check it out. We need your likes and comments to increase member awareness & participation in LICS. Please share recipes, recommendations and anything Italian!

<https://www.facebook.com/LancltalCultSociety>

This month is the LICS' Summer Picnic:

Sunday September 12, 2021, 11-5 PM

Hempfield Firehouse, Salunga Pavilion

19 Main St., Landisville, PA 17538

Reservations: Rosemary 717- 569-5200

Please sign-up as soon as possible!

Wishing everyone good health, and a happy summer's end!

Saluti,

Rosemary LaFata



If you enjoyed John Day's article on the brief history of bocce on page 3, and would like more information on the history of Lancaster Bocce, a book by LICS member, James J. Lombardo, *A Brief History of Bocce Ball in Lancaster Pennsylvania* is available from Sheri Criniti 717-898-0857. All proceeds form the sale of the book benefit the Lancaster Bocce League.

Members, if you have family news, births, deaths, marriage announcements and honors or awards that you would like to share with the membership, please email them to licsnewsletter@gmail.com. Or call Pat Valenzo at 717-569-9798.

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Dee's Upcoming LICS Trips!

Everyone wants to be out after the COVID 19 setback.

Reserve your seat now, these venues are filling up!

**March 13, 2022
Must be 21**

**Resorts Casino - Atlantic City NJ.
Cost: \$50, get \$10 in slot play - Deadline: January 20**

**May 13, 2022
Family Event**

**Dinner and Show
Good & Plenty Restaurant, followed by Sight & Sound Theater
Cost: \$105 - Deadline: March 20**

**October 15,2022
Family Event**

**Dutch Apple Dinner Theater, on stage show, "Saturday Night Fever"
Cost: \$66 - Deadline: October 9, 2021**

Make checks to: LICS. We accept Credit Cards. For information call 717-951-7112.

Send to: Dee Viscardi, 6486 Lincoln Court. East Petersburg, PA 17520



**Bocce:
A Brief
History
of a
Timeless
Sport
by John
Day**

The exact history of bocce has various versions, but all seem to agree that it was initially played with rocks in Egypt thousands of years ago. From there it spread to Greece and then to Rome. Soldiers of the Roman Empire used to play it to calm their nerves, also using rocks as their “balls”. From this beginning, a number of games have emerged to the present age, under the family name of boules. Among them are the French game pétanque (sometimes equated to boules, because both are French words), English bowls, and, of course, the Italian game of bocce. It was first played in its present form in the early 1800s. There are two main differences between pétanque and bocce. In the latter game, the balls are completely round and you are allowed to hit the pallino. In the former, the balls are somewhat elliptical (creating the possibility of a curved path), and you lose if you hit the small target ball (sometimes called “the jack”).

When bocce first arrived in the United States is also suspect, but most agree it was brought by Italian immigrants in the late 1800s. The English pronunciation is “botchy”, while the Italian pronunciation is “boechae”, with the vowel sounds similar to our long “o” and long “a”. The rules vary from group to group, and from league to league. Some even play that the teams alternate throws, no matter who is closest to the pallino. In my opinion, that makes for a completely different game, for it necessitates a change in strategy. The winning score is usually between 11 and 16, with the most common one being 12. This is what the Lancaster Bocce League uses, and you have to win by two.

The Lancaster Bocce League began in 1978. As a concession to denying Antonio Palumbo and Jim Lombardo’s request for the erection of a statue of Christopher Columbus, the mayor, Richard Scott, proposed the creation of bocce courts as a way to honor the contributions of the Italian-American

community. The first two courts were built in Buchanan Park. They were considered temporary and used a grass surface. Upgraded by 2003, they are still used today. As the sport became more popular, two more locations added bocce courts: Amos Herr Park in Landisville, and the Overlook Recreational Campus in Manheim Township. The League uses them on a regular basis, but they are open to the public at any other time.

This year the League has 23 teams. The schedule has each team playing 2 games per week across the three venues. It’s great to get out with a bunch of fun-loving people (mostly older at this point), and join in some friendly, but sometimes fierce competition. It’s also a time to practice your Italian, as there are some that were born in Italy, and love to converse in their native tongue. The teams are full for this year, but if you have an interest to play for next year, just get in touch with any of the directors, and they can steer you in the right direction. Our president this year, Rosemary LaFata, is actually a captain of a team. She’d be glad to get you started.



Carlo Bellini

Every generation has its version of the Wandering Scholar. The first person to occupy a chair in modern



languages at a North American college was Carlo Bellini (1735–1804), who taught for twenty-five years at the College of William and Mary. Bellini was a Florentine from a bourgeois business family. His freethinking and Masonic connections put him at odds with municipal authorities, so he prudently left town and traveled across Europe, learning German, French, Spanish, and English. He met up with a fellow Florentine Mason, Filippo Mazzei, in London.

In 1774, at the instigation of Mazzei, Bellini and his wife emigrated to Virginia and within months of their arrival were guests of Jefferson at Monticello. Bellini impressed Jefferson, who in subsequent years helped him stay afloat by finding him positions as a tutor and interpreter.

In his role as a Virginia militiaman, Revolutionary hero Patrick Henry, was Bellini’s captain. To him and to two other Italian volunteers, Henry said,

"You, Sir, render an important service to this state with your example, because barely arrived in this county, you voluntarily undertake to defend it as a soldier."

In 1778, Bellini wrote a letter to his brother in Tuscany that was subsequently published in two Florentine periodicals and widely circulated, which was almost certainly Bellini's intention. He wrote:

"I am at last a free and independent man. As a consequence of liberty and independence in all these vast regions one finds not even a single being so stupid as to have the insolence to believe himself superior to another. "

On Jefferson's recommendation, in March 1778, the State of Virginia appointed Bellini to be a foreign correspondent and interpreter, a role that Bellini puffed up among Italian friends to be that of "Secretary of this State of Virginia for Foreign Affairs." In August 1778, on the recommendation of Jefferson and of Patrick Henry (then the state's new governor), Bellini was appointed to the chair in Modern Languages at William and Mary. His sisters in Livorno referred to it as "Saint Mary."

During the British invasion and seizure of Williamsburg in 1780 classes were suspended for 2 years and the college was used as a hospital for wounded soldiers. While the revolutionaries abandoned the town, Bellini remained behind to protect the library and scientific apparatus and may have saved the campus by his personal diplomacy.

Bellini's salary depended on the fees of his students, and, in later years, when he suffered strokes and was invalid and paralytic, his resources dwindled to near nothing. Living in a run-down house near the campus, he survived on wine and biscuits brought to him by a student. When Bellini's sight declined, Jefferson arranged for a pair of eyeglasses. After Bellini's death in 1804, Jefferson, holding power of attorney, took responsibility for the disposition of the man's will. The case began while Jefferson was in his first term as President and dragged on for thirteen years after Bellini's death. In the very last of these documents, written from Monticello (1 August 1817), Jefferson made a special request to the consular office in Livorno that testified to his feeling for Italy: "[W]e are erecting a College in my neighborhood"—the future University of Virginia—and "are in want of a stone-cutter ... capable of cutting an Ionic capital ... and we suppose we can be better accommodated with one from your place than here, for indeed such workmen are scarcely to be had here at all.

Migliaccio di semolino (Semolina Cake)

Migliaccio, a crustless Neapolitan Semolina Cake is called *migliaccio* because it was originally made with millet, *miglio* in Italian.

Ingredients:

- 4 cups whole milk
- 2 lemons:
grated zest of one lemon
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1 cup semolina flour
- 2 Tablespoons butter
- 3 large eggs, 1 separated
- 1 2/3 cup ricotta cheese, firm, drain liquid
- powdered sugar for garnish, about 3 Tablespoons

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F and grease two 9-inch pie or tart pans.
2. In a large saucepan or Dutch oven, add milk, cinnamon stick, sugar, strips of lemon peel and bring to a boil.
3. Once the milk mixture comes to a boil, remove from heat and using a sieve or slotted spoon, remove and discard the lemon peel.
4. A little at a time, add the semolina flour, whisking constantly to prevent lumps from forming.
5. Return the pan to the heat and boil gently for 5 minutes, stirring constantly. The mixture will slowly thicken as the semolina flour is incorporated into the milk mixture. When done, it should resemble pancake batter.
6. Stir in the butter, remove from heat and let it cool to room temperature.
7. Once cool, stir in the 2 whole eggs and the 1 egg yolk, reserving the 1 egg white. Remove and discard the cinnamon stick. Add ricotta cheese, grated lemon zest and stir well.
8. In a separate bowl, using electric beaters, beat the egg white until stiff and then fold into the batter.
9. Pour the batter into the two pie or tart pans, dividing evenly.
10. Bake for 45 minutes at 350 degrees F. Check for doneness by inserting a toothpick into the center. If it comes out clean, the cake is done. Cool before serving. Sprinkle with powdered sugar.



From: anitaliandish.com

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L'OSSERVATORE LANCASTRIANO September, 2021

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Upcoming In-Person LICS Events

September 12 - LICS Summer Picnic

March 13, 2022 - Resorts Casino - Atlantic City NJ

**May 13, 2022 - Dinner at Good & Plenty Restaurant
followed by Sight & Sound Theater and Show**

**October 15, 2022 - Dutch Apple Dinner Theater
on-stage show, "Saturday Night Fever"**

Please check the LICS Website for updates.

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