



Eye Opener

OCT-NOV-DEC-2014

DISPATCH NEWS

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ST ANN NEWSLETTER OCT NOV DEC 2014

FROM THE PRESIDENT

I would like to sincerely thank everyone for their participation in making our Centenario Celebration a wonderful success. It was with great pride that I, as well as many others, watched as everything came together as one of the greatest events in our history.

Best wishes for the next century, Nick Cappuccia

CENTENARIO CELEBRATION

It all began with months of planning. The committee that did all the planning and preparation, worked very hard to make it a reality. It was a wonderful event and a great time was had by one and all. It started months ago with tote bags and lapel pins bearing the St Ann logo being passed out. Next everyone received a formal invitation to the grand event. Then the anticipation began to build. The evening before the main event there was a cocktail party at the club that was well attended. D.J. Dom played a wonderful selection of music that everyone enjoyed. A wide selection of delicious hors d'oeuvres and adult beverages were served.

The next morning there was a Mass at St. Thomas, delivered beautifully, in Italian by Father Don Peppino Cardegna of Jelsi, Italy who made the long trip from Italy for this once in a life time event. Many others from different parts of Italy as well as Canada attended our event. Following the Mass a procession, with a police escort, back to the club, was led by club members and dignitaries followed by our Saint on a trailer being pulled by a farm tractor which was followed by a marching band. Upon returning to the club everyone enjoyed coffee and pastry.

The big event took place Saturday night with more that 300 guests. The appetizers, dinner and dessert (made by many of our members) was outstanding. I personally had an excellent prime rib and my favorite dessert, home made biscotti. I must find who ever made the biscotti and lock her away in the tower kitchen!!

Father Cardegna gave the grace and we listened to officers and members of St Anns recognize and thank all who worked to bring this event to fruition. Members, past and present, who made this club possible, were acknowledged with a special word for Nick Allegretta. Later a marvelous slide presentation by Domnick Cappuccia and assisted by Anna Marie Mastrolilo was shown, depicting the history of the club. What a night it was. Everyone was dressed to the nines and looked simply marvelous, dancing and laughing the night away.

I have been a member for only eleven years and that night I felt as though I had been a member from the beginning. It truly is a big extended family. We all care for each other and it made my heart swell as I'm sure it did with many others. It was plain to see on the faces of Nick Cappuccia and Joe Valiante. Along with others, these two men have given of themselves selflessly to the betterment of this club. God Bless our club for another one hundred years and beyond.

The Editor

FROM THE AUXILLARY PRESIDENT

Wow – what a summer we've had – a record breaking Feast, a wonderful Centennial celebration and the storm of the season during the Oyster festival! Now it's time to look ahead to the upcoming festivities of the Auxiliary. Our October 2nd meeting is Membership Appreciation and Birthright shower. Please bring your gift of any necessity that will help a young

mother care for her baby. Our November 6th meeting will begin at 7:30 with staff from Aurora Health Care who will discuss home and health safety. The meeting will follow after a brief question and answer session. We will be celebrating the Auxiliary's 80th ++ birthday on Saturday, November 8th during DJ Night at the club. Please stop by to help celebrate and have a piece of birthday cake. There is no charge for our fun DJ Nights so join in the festivities any scheduled Saturday for a great night with friends. We will once again have our Mini-Craft Fair at our December 6th Auxiliary meeting from 6:30 -7:30 p. m. We have about 10 member vendors and have opened it up to non-members for a nominal fee. Anyone who has a craft, product or food for sale is welcome to participate. Please call Chairperson Carolyn Shannahan at (203) 246-2140 to leave a message for info or to make arrangements. Thanks for all your support!

Gratefully,
Betty Tavella Brink
Auxiliary President

THE EARLY DAYS

When St. Ann club began, it was with a few men from Jelsi, Compobasso Italy, who came to Norwalk in the late 1800's and early 1900's. Most lived on Bouton St. Some were boarding with friends. These friends helped the newcomers to get jobs. Weekends were spent helping each other, sometimes doing chores for the landlords. Some of these men worked for Patsy Cutrone as laborers. Patsy had a small one car garage in back of his house and this is where the club started. The garage was on Wilbur st. This is what I was told.

My maternal grandfather, two of his brothers and four brothers-in-law were among the first members. Lina Oman had told me her father, Valerio Santella was the first president of the club from 1914-1921, he died that year after stepping on a nail and got blood poisoning. He had been a carpenter. My maternal grandmother was a good friend of his widow from the old country. I knew his three sons of which two were also carpenters. I worked for one of them Angelo "Bucky" Santella. I also knew three of his daughters of which one was Sal Fratino's grandmother.

The rest of the history of the club can be read in the booklets that were on the table at our 100th anniversary celebration. Thinking back to the old days of this club, it is a very proud history with our ancestors and continues to be so.

As part of the centennial committee, I would like to thank everyone who attended the celebration. And thanking those who took out ads in our booklet. And to the women who baked, Donna Cutrone, Jen Venio, Mary Testa, Antoinette Valiante di Peppino, Rita Camarota, Marianna Cappuccia, Patty Moisisio, Patty Blake, Rosemary Romano, Bernadett Napolitano. Not only did they save the club money, they donated their time to make delicious baked goods for dessert. Thanks to them and the crew for the Friday before, with their help, morning noon and night and Sat. morning after mass. Kenny Prince, Mike and Marge Gabriele, Tom the bartender, John Vozzo, Pat and Donna Cutrone and Jen and Mike Venio, Kate Fiore, Camille Andreozzi. If there are any names I omitted I do apologize.

Sincerely, Joe Valiante

ITALIAN IMMIGRANTS OF RIDGEFIELD, CT.

Pasquale DeBenigno was an early Italian immigrant in Branchville. He was born on February 22, 1871, in Corvara, Italy. He married Caterina Maronianina also of Corvara, Italy, their children are John, Marion, Domenic, and Alice. Pasquale died on February 12, 1964 at 92 years of age and Caterina died on April 7, 1949 at 74 years of age.

DeBenigno's Store

For years Pasquale operated the Branchville General Store selling groceries and general merchandise. An old photograph of the store displays an overhead sign that reads "P D Benicuo Groceries & Merchandise - Fruits & Soft Drinks." The last name D Benicuo on the sign is likely a phonetic rendition of DeBenigno. In later photographs, the overhead sign reads: Branchville General Store- Fruit - Groceries - Ice Cream."

According to his daughter, Marian Ellis Pasquale DeBenigno established the general store in 1907 at 14 West Branchville Road. "As the family increased in size, father added two additions to the building, our family resided upstairs. I believe the house is one of the oldest in the area." This information from Marian Ellis ties in nicely to the discoveries on the second floor during renovations in 1985. "Thick oak beams were uncovered in the center section but not the left or right sections." This could indicate the center section of the 2nd floor was built to house the DeBenigno family before the left or right sections were added later on to house the immigrant boarders arriving from Italy. However, it could also be a result of at least 2 fires on the upper floors of DeBenigno's Store. One occurred in 1927, the other at a later date, likely the 1930's or

1940's. Marian's note that the house is one of the oldest in the area, is a "stretch"...The structure, as noted above, was more or less a storage or livestock barn located on Abijih N. Fallow's property in the mid-to-late 19th century.

Charles Emmons used to go to DeBenigno's to make purchases for his parents, "They sold general merchandise, groceries like flour and canned goods. After prohibition, the store opened as a saloon."

Newspaper Report from 1927:

"Two bandits, one wielding a revolver, the other a cheese knife, robbed \$50 from Pasquale DeBenigno's Store in Branchville in April. A shot fired at Mr. DeBenigno missed, went through four shoes on the shelf and lodged in the toe of the fifth. A few months later, part of Mr. DeBenigno's house burnt down."

Immigrant Tenement Housing

Long-time resident Lucy Scala relates, "On arriving in Branchville, the Italian immigrants would go first to Pasquale DeBenigno. When my mother, Giovanna Del Biondo, arrived by taxi from Norwalk Connecticut, at the grocery store, she received hugs and kisses of welcome from her cousin Pasquale."

Willis DeForest recalls, "Most of the Italian immigrants who first came from the Abruzzi area of Italy, arrived in Branchville and stayed at the DeBenigno house. After they found employment either on the railroad, at the quarry, or the G&B wire mill, they would find their own homes to live in."

The recollections of Charles Emmons, Lucy Scala and Willis DeForest appear in Aldo P. Biagiotti's book "IMPACT: The Historical Account of the Italian Immigrants of Ridgefield, CT." Mr. Biagiotti's documentation of the Italian immigrants of Ridgefield and Branchville is an amazing resource that includes family histories, employment and housing patterns. Biagiotti writes: "Over the years, Branchville has been an important Italian immigrant enclave of the town." Tenement houses, like DeBenigno's, offered a fresh start to Italian immigrants as they arrived at Branchville Station from 1910-30. It is for this very reason that 14 West Branchville Road was entered onto The National Registry of Historic Places on August 12, 1982.

OCTOBER 12 AT HERITAGE WALL

All are invited to attend a ceremony at Heritage Wall followed by a Mass for all of our deceased members. There will also be a dedication of a plaque for Valentino Ceccone who designed and fabricated the alcove for St Ann. The electric wiring and lighting was donated by Cappucci and Sons Electric. The Granite the Saint is placed on was donated by Nick Cappucci.

THANKS TO ALL

I would like to thank all the people who worked with the Centennial Committee that made our celebration the great success that it was.

Sincerely, Arlene Petersen

ATTENTION MEMBERS

As of October 31st any funds remaining on your club debit card will be lost, so use it or lose it!

ST ANN COMEDY NIGHT

Saturday Oct 4th at 7pm we will have the first ever comedy night at our club. Admission is \$20.00 in advance and \$30.00 at the door. A delicious dinner by the always talented St Ann Chefs will be served (pasta). Music by DJ Dom and comedy by Phil Selman and Friends. Reservations call Tony Cappuccia at 203 515 7706 or by e-mail at STANNCLUB@YAHOO.COM (preferred)

CENTENNIAL BARBECUE

A barbecue feast will be held October 11th from 7 to 11pm. The admission is \$20.00 per person. Limited to 200 guests. Reservations by October 2nd. Call Arlene Petersen at 203 322 2575 or Camille Andreozi at 203 849 0199. Country music by DJ Dom. It will be held inside the club and the menu will feature pulled pork, baby back ribs, bbq chicken thighs, cole slaw, beans, potato salad, corn bread, beer and ice cream.

TONY CAPPUCCIA APPOINTED

Mr. Tony Cappuccia has been appointed Chairman of the Entertainment Committee. He is working hard to bring more people to the club with new and innovative entertainment venues. There is a new Karaoke provider and there will be a Mystery Night and possibly a Casino Night. Check the web site for updates. If you have any ideas or suggestions please contact Tony. Come to your club, with your friends, and enjoy these events. As always we appreciate your support.

ST ANN FEAST A GREAT SUCCESS

Our annual feast was the best ever. The weather was wonderful, the entertainment, activities and food were super and the attendance was huge. A big thank you to the more than 200 members that made it all possible.

COOKBOOKS

St. Ann Mangia Mangia Cookbooks are available. They are \$15 each and will be on sale at all meetings, dinners, and mini craft fair. You may contact Arlene Petersen 203-322-2575 to make other arrangements or ask any officer or board member.

NEW MEMBERS

Tom Buono Sworn in on July 2, men's meeting sponsored by James O'Brien.

ADDRESS CHANGES AND E-MAIL ADDRESSES

In an effort to bring the club more into the electronic age we are asking that anyone with an e-mail address, who hasn't done so already, to please send it to Ken Romano. His e-mail address is rmyken@aol.com. We will use these addresses to update events and schedules as well as save postage and be able to keep members informed on a timely basis.

If you move and need to change your physical address, for the men contact Ken Romano and for the ladies, contact Camille Andreozi at 203-849-0199 or email her at candreozi@aol.com.

PLEASE READ

Any one wishing to contribute to this newsletter is encouraged to do so. Please contact Eric Fleisch at 847-7669 or by e-mail at BIGE101@optonline.net. The next edition will be sent on or about December 15, 2014

SICK OR HOSPITALIZED MEMBERS

If you know any member that is sick or hospitalized contact J. Ruggiero at 866-1477, for men. For the ladies contact Barbara Antonelli at (203) 866-3953.

A gift basket and card will be sent. If anyone knows of an Auxiliary member who has been permanently placed in a nursing home please contact Betty Brink with the information at (203) 847-8133. We would like to keep in touch with them by sending a card.

September

27 DJ Dom

October

1 Mens Meeting
2 Ladies Meeting
4 Comedy Night
12 Columbus Day at
Heritage Wall 1pm
Mass at Club 2pm
16 Ladies Dinner
18 Kings of Karaoke Night
25 Community Awards
Dinner
29 Mens Dinner

November

1 Private Party
5 Mens Meeting
6 Ladies Meeting
8 Womans Auxiliary
Birthday Party
DJ Night
15 Karaoke
20 Ladies Dinner
22 DJ Mike Marucci
26 Mens Dinner
29 DJ Dom

December

3 Mens Meeting
4 Ladies Meeting
6 Totally 80's Dance Party
11 Ladies Christmas Party
13 To Be Determined
Look for Updates
18 Ladies Dinner
20 Mens Christmas Party
31 New Years

COMING EVENTS

Special Note: For all DJ and Karaoke nights there will be various food trucks at these events with a full menu for your dining pleasure. Also if anyone wants to know anything about entertainment they can email. Stanclub@yahoo.com

OFFICERS

President – Nick Cappuccia
Vice President – Joe Valiante
Financial Secretary – Ken Romano
Treasurer – Sal Fratino
Recording Secretar – Vincent Scicchitano
Bar Manager – James O'Brian
Public Relations – Eric Fleisch
Sergeant At Arms – Ken Prince

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Nicandro Cappuccia
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Ken Romano
Vincent Scicchitano
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John Vozzo
Al Latte
Keith Stadler

LADIES AUXILIARY

President – Betty Tavella Brink
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Recording Secretary – Marie Mappa
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Sergeant at Arms – Mary Ann Cappuccia
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Vice Chairman – Vicki Raymond
Board Member – Lusia Cappuccia