



# Eye Opener

JAN - FEB - MAR 2015

**DISPATCH NEWS**  
**STANN NEWSLETTER JAN FEB MAR 2015**

WWW.STANNCLUB.ORG

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

As I leave my post voluntarily, I wish to thank all officers for the collaboration and understanding that, as always, has guided their splendid work. I thank all directors and board members for the wise decisions in securing the best interests of our club and to the Auxiliary for always responding to our requests for "help". Their full cooperation is always spontaneous and very much appreciated. Thanks also to the various Chairpersons that have helped to achieve the best results for our clubs' various events. I also want to extend a very special thank-you to all volunteers. They always promptly answer the call, with dedication and complete awareness of the duties of each occasion, no matter how difficult. The principles by which all these members conduct themselves is why we have been successful for 100 years and will continue to do so for at least another 100 years.

I leave my post voluntarily, with the certainty of having done my best for any task at hand. I have endeavored to rise to all occasions, as they appeared to my path with an awareness that maybe I could have done better.

From the bottom of my heart I am grateful to my wife and my entire family for being patient with me, always supportive in any occasion or decision I've made. I especially appreciate that my whole family, including my Grand Children are always involved with club functions.

This "special year" was very intense, with both our regular events and historic milestones, all of which were handled with professionalism and competence.

We had some distinguished members pass this year, to them and all other illustrious passed members, I extend my thoughts, thanks and appreciation for what they have done. We will miss them and remember them always.

Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year with your families and friends. Let us not forget our service men and women who are always in harms way and always remember the fallen. These men and women, past and present, have given above the call of duty and continue to protect our country and way of life. Show your appreciation and say thank you when you see them.

Lastly, and this is very important, let us all be united (men and women) around our new President and move forward into the New Year that marks the beginning of a "New Centenario". Congratulations Salvatore!! "E Buno Lavoro".

I consider all of St Ann as my family and therefore I love you and thank you for all your support. Remember that unity is strength, strength is awareness of result, result is our final goal. Thanks again to all of you for your support and dedication to me and the St. Ann Club.

Full of gratitude forever, Your outgoing President,  
Nicandro Cappuccia

Carissimi,

Ho apprezzato, sempre, il vostro personale supporto, la vostra fedeltà e l'attaccamento al nostro, amatissimo, circolo; Il retaggio che ci unisce e ci distingue, onora, soprattutto, il nostro reciproco riconoscimento ai sforzi ed insegnamenti dei nostril padri ed ai proponimenti futuri.

Con infinito Affetto, Nicandro Cappuccia

## FROM THE AUXILLARY PRESIDENT

I find it difficult to believe that the most special year and historical event of our club is coming to a close – our 100th Anniversary! After our review of the last 100 years of the St. Ann Club and 80 ++ years of the Auxiliary, it's easy to see why they have been so successful. Together we have made a positive impact on our community organizations, military troops, veterans, adults and children in need and each other - and that says it all. It's an amazing organization and a big thank you goes out to President Nick Cappuccia, all the men and women officers, board members, our committees, volunteers and supporters. All their hard work, dedication and commitment have ensured the success of this prestigious club and made it one of the most prominent organizations in Fairfield County and will continue to do so for the next 100 years!

Dues: Please remember to include a self addressed, stamped envelope when paying your 2015 dues (\$25 dues/\$25 events card) if you are unable to pick up your Annual Social Events Card in the near future.

The members of the 2014 Auxiliary Board of Directors wish you a wonderful Christmas filled with traditions and joyful gatherings with your friends and families and a peaceful and healthy 2015.

Wishing you many blessings,  
Betty Tavella Brink, Auxiliary President

## CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PARTY

About 90 children attended the St. Ann Children's Christmas Party on Sunday and a good time was had by all. Joe Sabas, Magician, keeps the kids entertained until Santa arrival. My sincere thanks to all who helped me make it a success, from buying the gifts, to wrapping them, to helping with the many duties that day. Without your help none of it would be possible. I also want to thank Donna Cutrone and Jeannette Iannacone for helping the new girls with setting up the Christmas tree and decorating the hall. Thanks to Ralph Allegretta for seeing that Santa has a ride in the Fire Truck and my thanks to Al Latte for being such a great Santa. I would also like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year.

Sincerely, Maria Chuhta, Chairperson

## GONE TO HIS REWARD

It is with great sorrow and regret that I report the passing of "Dixie" Cutrone. A beloved lifetime member who was kind and gracious to all he met. He served with honor in the Army Air Corps during WW II. He enjoyed building model airplanes as well as flying them. He was also an avid fisherman and boater on Long Island Sound. I will always remember the wonderful way he smiled with a twinkle in his eye. Our lives have been enriched having known Dixie.

## MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR

Each year that I make this Newsletter I have given various versions of Christmas and I'm sure you all know the details, so this year I have but a simple request. Each day of the new year let us ask ourselves if we practiced the Spirit of Christmas and therefore Christ today and can we do more tomorrow?

## JOINT MEETING JANUARY 7<sup>th</sup>

Please plan to attend, you never know what you might miss. These meetings are informative and sometimes lively. See you there.

## THE REST OF THE STORY . . . RIDGEFIELD IMMIGRANTS

*Continued from the last issue of The Eye Opener.*

The number of immigrants arriving in Branchville in need of housing very likely led to the addition of the 3rd floor. Branchville was a very good place to start a new life. There was plenty of employment opportunities for immigrants in this corner of Connecticut at the turn of the century working at various places such as: Bridgeport Wood Finishing Company: Monarch Mining Company: Daland & Gilbert, Co.: Grumen's Ice Tool Works and Gilbert & Bennett Manufacturing. The Railroad was in constant need of laborers to assist with railroad upgrades, and general maintenance. Many of the Town of Ridgefield's water and sewage lines were laid in this time period, not to mention the large estates of Redding and Ridgefield in need of gardeners, masons, and ground crews.

## BENNY'S RESTAURANT/BAR & THE HOME BREWS OF BRANCHVILLE

Mr. Emmons' comment on the store becoming a saloon after prohibition has been researched and it appears Benny Allegrassa (sometimes written Allegrazia) operated "Benny's Bar & Restaurant" at 14 West Branchville Road before moving up Route 7 to the Blue Feather and then over to Main Street Georgetown, CT. Allegrassa is not listed as an owner of the property so he likely leased the building from DeBenigno. An exact date of this "enterprise" has not been located but it is known Allegrassa was on Main St. Georgetown by 1951 so it is presumed it was in the 40's.

Alcohol was not new to Branchville nor the DeBenigno's store, as two rather large barrels of wine and/or hard cider are proudly displayed in the oldest known photograph of the building. In the 'Roaring Twenties' Branchville was said to have a "Roar All on Its Own". While New York City had its whiskey fueled speakeasies and bootleggers, Branchville had 10 to 15 wine and hard cider drinking rooms in the homes and barns of the local "home-brewers". In the 1972 Wilton Bulletin article "Branchville in the Roaring Twenties" that discusses these drinking rooms, a longtime Italian-American resident noted he grew up not too far from "The House that Booze Built" which raises the question: was that house owned by Pasquale DeBenigno? I guess we'll never know for sure but it was one of the larger homes in the area.

These drinking rooms were all run by hard-working, God-fearing Italian-Americans. Most had recently come from Italy bringing with them many generations worth of winemaking knowledge. One may ask: "where'd they get the grapes?" Yankee peddlers in those days brought around a wide variety of goods, from clothes to pots and pans to jewelry...one in particular filled orders for California grapes once a year. A gentle "first pressing" of these grapes produced company wine served when friends visited, a harder "second press" produced everyday table wine, and a third pressing resulted in a poor quality wine that tasted mostly of water and stems but it passed as wine in a pinch. The Italians stored the wine in 55-gallon barrels, usually out in a barn, and they used milk bottles to draw off supplies for the house. Milk bottles had the great advantage of being free, which explains their usage.

Early on the Italians of Branchville were producing wine and cider for their own consumption but over time many of their neighbors learned of their talents and wanted to buy some...and so was a chance to make a little extra cash. "As soon as a family made enough to get a little ahead, they built a house and all of these houses had drinking rooms."

The drinking rooms were filled with tables and chairs and were almost like little pubs. A quart of cider cost 50 cents, and usually each person who came in would buy a quart to share with his friends who would later return the favor. There were a lot of bachelor hired hands around and some of them with a fair amount of time on their hands would come and drink all day.

## NEW MEMBERS AND READINGS:

Louis Caruso sponsored by Chris Iannacone

Joseph Infantino sponsored by Joe Tamburri

Rocco Frattaroli sponsored by Tony Cappuccia

## 1ST READINGS AT THE MEN'S DECEMBER MEETING:

Donald Uva Sr. sponsored by Al Latte

Mike Rossi sponsored by Jay Ruggiero

Milton Buchta Jr. sponsored by Jay Ruggiero

## RECENT LIFE MEMBERS

John Conti Judge Anthony DePanfilis  
Robert Mercurio Tony Pullia

Patrick Finn  
Gerald Toni

Michael Lepore

Salvatore Mattera

Mario Pinti

## NEW AUXILIARY MEMBERS

Gina Arena sponsored by Christy McWilliams  
Carol DiCerto sponsored by Anne Quigano  
Linda Goldman sponsored by Kay Martino  
Ginger Raymond sponsored by Vickie Zlock  
Rosalind Serna sponsored by Vickie Zlock  
Debra DeFalco sponsored by Camille Andreozzi

Kelly Beckham sponsored by Vicki Raymond  
Frances DiPietro sponsored by Vickie Zlock  
Ann Otto sponsored by Karen Poggi  
Maria Scicchitano sponsored by Betty Brink  
Julie Signore sponsored by Christy McWilliams

Rosemarie Cocchia sponsored by Ursula Cocchia  
Nicole Fiore sponsored by Kate Fiore  
Marlene Hammond sponsored by Anna Mastrolillo  
Marianne Scinto sponsored by Connie Peters  
Kathi Sonntag sponsored by Marian Barbieri

## MEN'S 2015 DUES

The annual 2015 membership dues will be \$100. Once again there will be an annual minimum amount of \$50 for each member including members who are exempt from paying annual dues. This will bring the annual yearly total for each member to \$150. Life members will still be exempt from both.

To compensate for the annual minimum fee, you will receive a new debit card in the amount of \$50 to spend at the club bar or Mother of Mary functions. (Exceptions are the Game dinner, Raffle tickets, Saint Ann Feast, Oyster Festival or yearly dues.) You will need to use it by October 31, 2015. You will not be allowed to carry over the minimum fee to the next year. The annual minimum fee is to encourage our members to come to the club, get more involved, benefit from many of the activities we offer and enjoy the company of fellow members.

Dues and annual minimum are due January 1, 2015. Please make checks out to Mother of Mary and send a self-addressed stamped envelope so that we can mail the debit card to you. Remember these fees are due January 1, 2015.

## MARINA AND MAINTENANCE NEWS:

The dredging is done, the bubblers are in, and the fish are waiting to be caught...Next Year!!! Marina slip contracts will be mailed out to all current marina members on or about February 1, 2015. At this time it appears that we will have some openings in 2015 so if you are thinking you might need a slip please call or e-mail me so I can at least put you on the waiting list. In order to get a slip you do need to be a member of the club. Thanks to the marina committee (Sal Covello, Joe Agliota, Frank Fellicissimo, Ed Mathews, Rinaldo Diiorio, Vinnie Pampena) for their support and input. Warren 203 246-0377, wfondu@yahoo.com

Without Big Mike, it was a tough year trying to keep everything working properly... but we seem to have gotten through it, thanks to Tony Pomponi, Tony Pullia, Mario Pinti, Sal Covello, Keith Stadler, Joe Valiante, Frank Danieri, Al Latte, Peter Napolitano, Ken Romano, Jay Ruggiero, Matt Wolk, Marc Tzanavaris, Mike Fahey, and Nick, Tony and Dom Cappuccia and Joe Chehta

Next year 2015, our new president (Sal Fratino) and I want to expand the scope of the maintenance committee to include a grounds committee as well as a beautification committee (i.e. flowers and shrubs).

In this regard we will be calling upon members of the women's auxiliary (as well as the men's club) to help us achieve our goal of a first class facility - inside and out! Anyone interested in helping out please let me or Sal know. Warren 203 246-0377

## 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 Andreozzi at 203-849-0199 or email her at candreozzi@aol.com.

## ST ANN EVENT PHOTOS BY ANNA MASTROLILLO-PHOTO

I upload all St Ann Event photos taken onto a Face Book page called: "Anna Mastrolillo-Photo" this page can be viewed after you become a friend of the page. Only St Ann Event Photos are posted on this Face Book Page.

If you are not on Face Book you can also go to the St Ann club website to see/link to the photos at this address: <http://www.stannclub.org/event-photos.html> A reminder to all event chair persons: I am happy to photograph your event but please be sure to notify me directly either at a meeting; by calling me (203) 855-1357, in-boxing me on Face Book (Anna Mastrolillo-Photo) or emailing me at photoproshooter@yahoo.com. I will be very happy to attend and photograph any event I am able to attend. Thank you Anna Mastrolillo

## 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 March 15, 2015.

## 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.

## January

- 3 Club open – no entertainment
- 7 Joint Meeting
- 8 Game Dinner
- 10 Murder Mystery Dinner
- 15 Ladies Dinner
- 17 Karaoke
- 24 DJ Dom
- 28 Men's Dinner
- 31 Country Western Night  
Grab your boots and cowboy hats and enjoy your country favorites

### OFFICERS

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

## February

- 4 Men's Meeting
- 5 Ladies Meeting
- 7 DJ Dom
- 14 St. Ann's Valentine's dinner dance  
Tim Currie Band celebrates Valentine's Motown style  
Full dinner \$35  
Contact Tony Cappuccia
- 19 Ladies Dinner
- 21 Karaoke
- 25 Men's Dinner
- 28 Local boy Billy Genuario makes his debut at St Anns

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Pat Cutrone, Chairman  
Mike Gabriele, Vice Chairman  
J. Ruggerio  
Ralph Allegretta  
Nicandro Cappuccia  
Sal Fratino  
James O'Brian  
Ken Romano  
Vincent Scicchitano  
Joe Valiante  
John Vozzo  
Al Latte  
Keith Stadler

## March

- 4 Men's Meeting
- 5 Ladies Meeting
- 7 DJ night
- 14 To Be Determined
- 19 Ladies Dinner
- 25 Men's Dinner

**ALL NON DINNER DANCE  
EVENTS FEATURE FOOD  
TRUCK WITH FULL MENU**

### LADIES AUXILIARY

President – Betty Tavella Brink  
Vice President – Maria Prince  
Recording Secretary – Marie Mappa  
Corresponding Secretary – Barbara Antonelli  
Financial Secretary – Camille Andreozzi  
Treasurer – Maria Chuhta  
Sergeant at Arms – Mary Ann Cappuccia  
Public Relations – Maria Vozzo  
  
Chairman of the Board – Kate Fiore  
Vice Chairman – Vicki Raymond  
Board Member – Lusia Cappuccia