NORTH BAY ITALIAN CULTURAL FOUNDATION
NBICF
Dedicated to the Study, Preservation and Enjoyment of Italian Culture

Mosaico Culturale novembre e dicembre 2026 - Volume XLII– Numero 6

In this newsletter:
Letter from the Co-Presidents, Christmas Dinner, Events, Board Nominations
Below: Getting ready for Pranzo della Famiglia



Steve and Vince cooking at Cibo Pizzeria



Neapolitan ragu simmering

Messagio dei Presidenti

Cari Amici,

We had quite the traditional family dinner on September 20th. The parking lot at the Italian Cultural Center was turned into a giant kitchen and dining area, and guests feasted on appetizers, bread, Neapolitan ragu with 3 meats, paccheri pasta, salad, and a huge assortment of cookies for dessert. This was our first Pranzo della Famiglia and we look forward to repeating it!

The sauce simmered all day on Saturday at Cibo Rustico Pizzeria (thanks to **Ray D'Argenzio** who opened up his kitchen). Board members **Steve Albini** and **Vince Bianco** were the master chefs and created a rich and flavorful ragu. On Sunday, we heated up the ragu in the parking lot, boiled the paccheri pasta and had our Sunday dinner.

Many amazing volunteers helped to make this happen. A special thanks to Ray D'Argenzio for not only offering his restaurant kitchen to cook, but also donating the sausage, canned tomatoes and paccheri pasta. On top of that he brought 7 guests to the table. Grazie mille.

These events bring us together to celebrate and experience the culture we all love. We also had a lot of fun at the first annual Penngrove Festa Italiana on October 17th, where we had a booth. Nine new members signed up, and we sold some fun Italian swag and ceramics. **Gino Muzzatti** arranged for two

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Please consider joining us to create and plan these cultural events. We are seeking nominations to our Board of Directors. There is a special notification below explaining requirements and commitment. Think about it! It's people who make things happen. Be one of them.

Coming up soon is the NBICF Annual Board Meeting at the Italian Cultural Center on November 4th, from 3:30-5:00pm. You are welcome to attend and we hope to see you there. This would be a good way for you to assess if you'd like to join us on the Board.

We would like to welcome **Dani Foster** as Director and also Treasure of our Board. Dani has served as Secretary and Treasurer for several non-profits and has experience in data validation, database administration, website design and technical training. Before joining our Board, she updated the NBICF website and continues to be our webmaster.

As the holidays approach we are looking forward to our Christmas Dinner on December 17th, which will be filled with music, singing, dancing, a silent auction and of course good food.

We have lots of exciting activities planned for 2027 and hope to see you.

A presto,
Susan Macaluso and René Berardi
Co-Presidents





We are incredibly honored and grateful to Micheline Justman (may she rest in peace) for the most generous gift bequeathed to the North Bay Italian Cultural Foundation in her trust.

Upcoming Events



Christmas Dinner

Thursday December 17, 2026
Veterans Memorial Center
5:00pm - 8:00pm

A festive night filled with music, dancing and of course good food. Appetizers, dinner, dessert, and wine at table.
Host bar. Silent Auction.
$45 member/ $55 non-member

Register Now!

NBICF Annual Board Meeting

Wednesday, November 4, 2026
3:30pm - 5:00pm

Italian Cultural Center, 64 Brookwood Ave.
At this meeting we will conduct our regular business and also have a special section on the year in review and future visions. You are welcome to attend this meeting.
RSVP

FINDING HISTORY DAY

Saturday, November 7, 2026
Veterans Memorial Building
1351 Maple Ave
Santa Rosa, CA 95404
10:00am - 2:00pm

Finding History Day is the Sonoma County Historical Society's annual celebration of local history, bringing together dozens of historical societies, museums, archives, libraries, genealogical groups, and cultural organizations from across the county and surrounding region.

We'll be there with a display of our organization since 1984 and historical information about Italians in Sonoma County.



Sunday, November 29
Al Pacino won an "Oscar" for his brilliant portrayal of an overbearing, blind retired Lieutenant Colonel who hires a young guardian to assist him. It is both a heart-warming and heart-wrenching tale of opposites attracting when they embark on a wild weekend trip that will change the lives of both men forever. In English. Hopefully next month we will be able to see the original Italian film from which it was adapted.



Sunday, December 27
A blind Italian Captain (Fausto Consolo), accompanied by his young aide Ciccio (Giovanni Bertazzi), who has been assigned to him by the army, is on his way from Turin to Naples to meet with an old comrade.

This Italian original from which "Scent of a Woman" was adapted has a special charm. It's a pity that the American remake completely lost the Italian culture, both of everyday life in Italy and the Italian way of doing cinema. In Italian with subtitles. (This film has been ordered from South Korea! Hopefully it will arrive in time and we can compare and contrast the two).

Step Up and Join the Board of Directors

All backgrounds and experiences welcome.

Requirements:

- Active NBICF membership, Passion for all things Italian, Desire to share the culture
- One 1 ½ hour meeting monthly, Committee assignments of your choice
- No previous board experience necessary

We are also looking to fill the Secretary position.
Send your nomination to nbicf2member@gmail.com
Siamo nella stessa barca! (We're in this together!)

Of Italian Descent…

Armando Mastronardi, immigrated from Italy in the 1920s, and moved to Ontario, Canada, to start farming. His son, **Umberto Mastronardi,** built the first commercial greenhouse in North America during the 1940s, after seeing Holland's greenhouse technology. He founded Mastronardi Produce in 1954 in Ontario, Canada.

His son, **Don Mastronardi**, took over at the age of 25, after the passing of Umberto. The company held greenhouse operations from 5 to 10 acres, until 1994, when Don built a 50-acre super-greenhouse, the first of its kind in North America. Now **Paul Mastronardi**, Don's son, is the current President and CEO.

Mastronardi Produce manages over 5,000 acres of controlled-environment greenhouse capacity spanning Canada, the United States, Mexico, and the Netherlands, employing over 3,500 people. The main flagship brand for gourmet produce is SUNSET®, that includes Campari tomatoes, Flavor Bombs®, and Queen of Greens® lettuce, to name a few.

Leggiamo

Winter is around the corner, and sometimes a good book is all we need. Diane McCurdy started a book club back in 2019 that met upstairs at the Center. After Covid, it did not start up again. A featured book was, ***Auntie Poldi and the Sicilian Lions***, by Mario Giordano.

Mario Giordano is a bestselling mystery and thriller author in Germany. He was born in Munich, Germany to parents that were immigrants from Italy. His first book that was translated into the English language was *Auntie Poldi and the Sicilian Lions* (2015).
There are three more novels in the series now.
Auntie Poldi and the Vineyards of Etna / Fruits of the Lord (2016)
Auntie Poldi and the Handsome Antonio (2020)
Auntie Poldi and the Lost Madonna (2021)

Parliamo

Practice and learn Italian!

Incontro, our conversation group, meets on the 1st, 3rd, and 5th Saturdays at our Italian Cultural Center on 64 Brookwood Ave, 10:30am-noon; all levels welcome. For info, contact René at nbicf2member@gmail.com or call the Center at (707) 591-9696.

For information on Italian classes through the SRJC, contact eevans@santarosa.edu.

Click here for more information

La Storia della Mia Famiglia



JoAnn (Giovanna) Ferrera Piantanida

As Volunteer Coordinator for NBICF, JoAnn is the queen of our volunteer recruitment. You have no doubt heard her distinct voice on phone calls urging you to become involved. Her enthusiasm and passion for Italian culture are contagious. Read about her journey.

JoAnn (Giovanna) Cafferata Serafino Ferrera Piantanida has a deep love for her Italian heritage, rooted in her family's origins in Sestri Levante, Liguria and the Piedmont regions of northern Italy. Her father, Mario

Cafferata, came to America in 1912 at just six years old, while her mother's family maintained strong ties to Italy through her grandfather's journeys as a merchant seaman. Growing up in an Italian family, JoAnn treasured the traditions, family gatherings, and, of course, the wonderful recipes passed down by her mother and grandmother. Today, cooking remains her greatest passion, and she carries on those cherished traditions by sharing family recipes with her children and friends. A devoted mother to Karyn and David, JoAnn has enjoyed a rich and varied life, including 26 months in Alaska during her first husband Donald's Army service and a rewarding career in several fields.

For JoAnn, being part of NBICF since 1995 has been a true gift. Over the years, she has served eight years on the Board, contributed to countless committees, and now brings her warmth and enthusiasm to her role as Volunteer Coordinator. What she treasures most are the lasting friendships and the special bond shared by members who celebrate a common heritage. Her trips to Italy in 1999 and 2016 brought her closer to her roots, especially a memorable visit to Sestri Levante, where she met cousins and saw the home where her father was born. JoAnn hopes to see NBICF continue to grow by welcoming younger generations and keeping Italian traditions alive through family stories, treasured recipes, and celebrations. Her dedication, love of family, and pride in her heritage embody the very spirit of NBICF. Ciao for now!

At events and in each issue of Mosaico, we will present member stories.
Send nominations to Susan or René at nbicf2member@gmail.com.

In Memoriam

Lois Ann Azevedo
Lois was born in 1939 Santa Rosa, CA, then a small town of 12,000 people. She married her first love, Daniel, in 1958. Dan died in 1996, and after many years, Lois let love find her again with Ron Fertitta, who passed away in 2020. She and Ron were always helping out at the NBICF dinners and most recently, Lois helped her cousin Diane McCurdy with the Sundays at the Movies.

Virginia (Ginny) Solimine
Ginny was born in San Francisco in 1934 and passed away on Columbus Day, 2026. She was married to Joe for 47 years. He too was a member of NBICF and passed away in 2012. Ginny loved to sing. She would leave friends a "Happy Birthday" song on their phone. She was a member of St. Rose Choir and the Coro Allegro.

Rummage Sale

We are planning to have a rummage sale in the near future!
Rummage sale items, such as: pottery, gently used items, art, books, anything with an Italian theme, can be dropped off at the NBICF Italian Cultural Center on the 1st, 3rd and 5th Saturdays of each month between 10:30am - noon.
As usual volunteers will be needed for this fun event.