“You’re not gonna write another one of those Chief Hennessey books are you?” Justin Nystrom remembers Joseph Segreto, former owner of popular Italian restaurant Eleven 79, asking him in one of their first conversations.

Lemons. Oysters. Macaroni. Red gravy. Grocery stores. These aren’t the words people usually think of when Nystrom asks them about Italians. They think of the Godfather, the mob, and hall of famers such as Joe DiMaggio. But Nystrom believes the story of the Sicilian immigrants in New Orleans goes deeper.

“I couldn’t really write this story without talking about all things happening around [immigrants], of how they got here and what happened to them,” shared Nystrom on his book Creole Italian: Sicilian Immigrants and the Shaping of New Orleans Food Culture, released August 1 of this year. “I tell a story about a people who really make an important contribution to a city, but in ways that aren’t obvious on the surface.”

His research began with a study on the Italian-owned corner grocery stores on the streets of New Orleans in the early 2000s, but took him all the way back to the 1830s. He conducted one-on-one interviews with about 30 people, including a woman born in Galveston in 1912, with her best friend she had known her whole life, and Joseph Segreto, who passed away in 2015, but had quickly become someone Nystrom considered a friend.

“I would go down and see Joe and he would cook for me in a sear-sucker suit and wouldn’t get a spot on him,” Nystrom shared. “[The book] talks about the restaurant business and how it changed over time. It’s very different today than how it was even 40 years ago.” Segreto was key in sharing about those changes.

Nystrom’s research also features an oral history collection that was recorded by Joseph Maselli, the founder of the American Italian Cultural Center in New Orleans. Over the span of 1976 to 1980, Maselli went out with his tape recorder and interviewed over 120 individuals about their families and the current state of New Orleans. Nystrom also dug into newspaper clippings for information about the Italian immigrants who were part of the blue collar working class.

“Anytime I would interview someone, I would do genealogical research on them,” said Nystrom. He discovered government documents, including birth and death certificates, drafts and military records, state inventories, criminal records, and contested wills, where he describes finding the best “dirty laundry” of families.

Nystrom grew up in rural Illinois, the grandson of Hungarian and Prussian immigrants. He started out with a career in real estate after studying architecture. After a few years, he decided he wanted to do more creative work and switched into a career in academia, turning his focus to writing about food culture and traditions as a part of identity. He then met the godfather of his children, who is Sicilian, which lit a match that would years later turn into his recent literary release.

“I didn’t set out to write about restaurants at all and I wasn’t planning on writing about the early 19th century. This was all new to me. I didn’t know nothin’ about nothin’,” said Nystrom of Creole Italian.

He will be visiting the ICCC on Wednesday, November 7, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. for a presentation and conversation on his book. Copies will be available for purchase at the event. For tickets and more information, visit our website at www.icchouston.com.
The 40th Houston Italian Festival was held on the grounds of the University of St. Thomas from October 11 to the 14. Thousands of people from Houston and beyond came together to celebrate Italian culture and traditions as one united community. Above are photos from the weekend that was filled with lots of Italian food, wine, and plenty of action, from entertainers and performers on the main stage to tastings and cooking classes for children.

A special thank you to our sponsors who helped make this event possible: Bud Light, Fellini Cafe, Gelazzi, Greensheet, Houston Arts Alliance and the City of Houston, Maggiano’s, Michael’s Cookie Jar, Piatto, and the University of St. Thomas.

Festival competition results:

Raffle:
- Grand prize: David Brown
- 2nd prize: Anita Elliot
- 3rd prize: Gloria Borreca

I Madonnari Sidewalk Art:
- 1st place: Seth Nguyen
- 2nd place: William Carbajal
- 3rd place: Erandi Lopez

Bocce ball:
- 1st place: PK Ballers (Stacey Efaw & Son Tran) - 6th time participants, won the 2015 tournament
- 2nd place: Cosimos (Michael Lodico & Christin Lodico) - 5th time participants

Pasta Eating (Saturday):
- 1st: Ninssen Cardona
- 2nd: Raven Aguas
- 3rd: Joseph Damele

Pasta Eating (Sunday):
- 1st: Manuel Esquivel
- 2nd: Luke Rodgers
- 3rd: Ricky Hopp

Grape Stomp (Saturday):
- 1st: Meghan & Taylor
- 2nd: Trent & Drew
- 3rd: Katrina & Austin

Grape Stomp (Sunday):
- 1st: Anne Marie & Hayden
- 2nd: Leonardo & Jose
- 3rd: Gianfranco & Guillermo
new iccc members

Benvenuti! The ICCC wishes to welcome the following new members and invites them to stay fully engaged with all of the wonderful programs and events that the ICCC has to offer. For more information about becoming a member and joining the ICCC family, please contact Alessandra Pistone, Business Director, at 713-524-4222 ext. 6 or at accounting@iccchouston.com.

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Mr. Frank J. Vargas Jr.
Ms. Rachel Wu

I hope you have had a wonderful beginning of the holiday season. At Milford House, we could not be more thankful for everything this year has brought us. Let me start by acknowledging the thousands of you who helped to make Festa Italiana’s 40th year such a success. Thank you! Whether you were part of our formidable executive committee, volunteering at one of the many booths, or simply showing your support by attending Festa and having fun, we could not have done it without you. As I wrote in my previous letter, we have been a part of this city’s history for such a long time and plan to be around for even longer. This can only happen if all of us, together, continue to make a commitment to this beautiful vision, to celebrating the heritage that unites us. As I near the end of my tenure as president of the board, I could not be prouder of the passion and hard work that all of us put into Festa once again this October.

We have much to look forward to in 2019, as well. Thanks to the tireless enthusiasm of our board and of our ICCC team, Ray, Erika, Kat, Alessandra Giulia, Kevin, Keith, and our language instructors, Milford House has been bustling with activities that have put us on the map like never before. Our Italian school is experiencing extraordinary enrollment, as are the cultural events and the cultural enrichment courses. It is very exciting for me to see that we have been so successful in our objective over the past three years. From the very beginning of my tenure, I encountered kindness and enthusiasm from everyone at the ICCC, board members, staff and volunteers, alike. You helped me grow as a person and made it so much fun to fulfill the important job of fostering and expanding our mission. I will never forget the warmth and welcome I experienced—even as I step down from this role, my husband Carl and I know that the community and friendships we were so lucky to make will be treasured additions to our lives for years to come.

I would like to end this letter on a personal note. I have been so honored to serve you for the last three years. From the very beginning of my tenure, I encountered kindness and enthusiasm from everyone at the ICCC, board members, staff and volunteers, alike. You helped me grow as a person and made it so much fun to fulfill the important job of fostering and expanding our mission. I will never forget the warmth and welcome I experienced—even as I step down from this role, my husband Carl and I know that the community and friendships we were so lucky to make will be treasured additions to our lives for years to come.

Have a blessed holiday, everyone, and see you at Milford House soon!

Livia Bornigia
ICCC 2018 President

La Voce Italiana's 40th year such a success.

La Voce Italiana's 40th year such a success.

La Voce Italiana's 40th year such a success.

La Voce Italiana's 40th year such a success.
When entering Alda Merini’s house in Ripa Ticinese in Milan, you had the startling impression of plunging in a new order of things and thoughts. The welcome on the door was a tribute to Vanni Scheiwiller: “A man who flew so high that many weaker spirits brought him down”, the publisher that made her poetic voice remerge from the obscurities of the hospitalization in a mental house.

It was thanks to _La Terra Santa_ (The Holy Land, 1984), one of her masterpieces, and _L'altra verità. Diario di una diversa_ (The Other Truth. Diary of An Other, 1986), a book full of epiphanies and flashes that only weakly resembles to an autobiography. The power of Alda Merini’s poetic inspiration was so indisputable that Franco Loi, hit by her style and verses, named her “una poetessa che sa ascoltare il vento” (a poet who is able to listen to the wind).

Alda Merini’s poetry was so attached to her native Milan (“Milan, pure Oyster, I am your Pearl, My Love”) but, at the same time, so universal in the width of its breath, that it became able to embrace the whole humanity in her last mystic production.

For her entire life, Merini’s flesh has been in touch with the flesh of the world and no matter how obscure and painful this flesh could be, Alda’s voice has always had the ability to sublimate it, though never looking for a compromise. Rooted in the roots of animate and inanimate things in a so immediate way, Alda Merini has incessantly questioned the mystery of life, through ancient myths and Christian faith:

“The most superb thing is the night when the last threats tumble and the soul throws itself into adventure. As for him, he is silent in your womb as if reabsorbed by blood that finally takes on the color of God and you pray that he will always be silent so you won’t hear him as a steady gurgling even inside the walls” (translation by Susan Stewart)

Alda Merini’s poetry was so attached to her native Milan (“Milan, pure Oyster, I am your Pearl, My Love”) but, at the same time, so universal in the width of its breath, that it became able to embrace the whole humanity in her last mystic production.

When, on the November 1, 2009, her roots of “ancient mistery” - just to recall one of her marvelous poems “Vedessi com’è grande il pensiero del mare” (You should see how big is the thought of the sea) - left this Earth, her readers were caught by astonishment, because, with the chant of her limpid poetic voice, she had convinced them that she was here to stay forever.
"40 for 40" Campaign 2018

The Houston Italian Festival’s 40 for 40 Fundraising Campaign was kicked off in March with a letter to all members and friends of the ICCC. As of October 14, 2018, we have received $8,280 from 123 members and friends, totaling 207 units of $40, for an average of just over $67.31 per donation. We sincerely thank all of our donors listed below for their participation and continued support. List of donors current as of date of printing.

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# NOVEMBER 2018

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**November 7 - Creole Italian: Presentation with Author**
Join us for a special presentation and conversation with author Justin Nystrom on his recent release "Creole Italian: Sicilian Immigrants and the Shaping of New Orleans Food Culture." Copies will be available for purchase.

- Time: 7:00 pm | Price: $10 for Members and $15 for Non-Members | Place: ICCC Houston

**November 11 - Italian Mass and Pasta Lunch**
Join us every second Sunday of the month at 10:30 am for a Roman Catholic Mass which is said in both Italian and English. If you decide to stay after Mass, a delicious home-cooked pasta lunch is served for only $5 a plate (children 10 and under are free). Experience Mass, or just come for lunch, in a personal setting with family and friends.

- Time: Mass starts at 10:30 am, Lunch starts at 11:30 am ($5 pasta lunch) | Place: ICCC Houston
### December 2018

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9:30 am |
| 2      | 3      | 4       | 5         | 6        | 7      | 8        |
| Mass   | 10:30 am  
Pasta Lunch  
11:30 am |
|        | 16     | 17      | 18        | 19       | 20     | 21       |
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7:00 pm |
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#### December 1 - La Piccola Cucina - Italian Cooking Class for Kids
La Piccola Cucina is a hands-on cultural culinary experience for children aged 3-10 years old. Children will wear chef aprons and toques and learn basic Italian language, metric system and culture while preparing authentic Italian cuisine.

- Time: 11:30 am - 1:00 pm  
- Price: $30 for Members and $45 for Non-Members  
- Place: ICCC Houston

#### December 9 - Italian Mass and Pasta Lunch
Join us every second Sunday of the month at 10:30 am for a Roman Catholic Mass which is said in both Italian and English. If you decide to stay after Mass, a delicious home-cooked pasta lunch is served for only $5 a plate (children 10 and under are free). Experience Mass, or just come for lunch, in a personal setting with family and friends.

- Time: Mass starts at 10:30 am, Lunch starts at 11:30 am ($5 pasta lunch)  
- Place: ICCC Houston
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The Houston Italian Festival is funded in part by the City of Houston through the Houston Arts Alliance.
Castagnaccio, a Tuscan chestnut cake


If you want to bake a good castagnaccio, the Tuscan chestnut cake depends almost exclusively on the flour you use. Since you do not add sugar to the batter, the chestnut flour should be sweet and tasty on its own, and that's the reason it is known as farina dolce, sweet flour. In Tuscany we have a renowned DOP flour, Farina di Neccio della Garfagnana. As soon as it is on your tongue, the powdery consistency will melt down and a sweet taste of chestnut will immediately spread, tickling the memories... a little girl with a light blue quilted jacket, wool gloves on her little hands, a white paper cone and 1,000 lire of roasted chestnuts, lights from the shops, her parents and a sweet chestnut flavour. The castagnaccio you can find in my area – Siena and Val d’Elsa – is enriched with raisins and pine nuts. The typical recipe from Garfagnana mixes the orange peel aroma with the richness of walnuts.

Ingredients (10 servings)
preparation time: 10 minutes
cooking time: 35 minutes

- 500 g (17 oz.) chestnut flour
- 800 ml (3 1/3 cup) water
- 40 g (1.4 oz) pine nuts
- 150 g (5.2 oz) raisins
- 1 sprig rosemary
- 1 pinch salt
- Extra virgin olive oil

Directions
1. Preheat oven to 180°C (355°F).
2. Soak the raisins in warm water.
3. Sift the chestnut flour and salt in a large bowl. Add the water in a thin stream, stirring continuously to avoid lumps. Continue to add the water until you have a smooth and liquid batter, autumnal brown and warm. It is supposed to be as liquid as a pancake batter. Add half of the pine nuts and half of the well-squeezed raisins and stir again.
4. Grease with extra virgin olive oil a rectangular baking-pan, about 25 x 40 cm (10 x 15 in) large, and scrape in the chestnut batter.
5. Sprinkle with the remaining pine nuts and raisins the surface and add the rosemary needles.
6. Drizzle with extra virgin olive oil and bake for about 35 minutes until the chestnut cake is firm and covered with wrinkles, crisp on the outside and soft inside. You can eat it warm or cold.

Pair it with: Vin Santo

Taken from https://winefolly.com/review/vin-santo-wines-of-italy/

Vin Santo (or Vino Santo) is a viscous, typically sweet dessert wine made in Italy, predominantly in Tuscany. The wine is loved for its intense flavors of hazelnut and caramel. When paired with biscotti, Vin Santo becomes “Cantucci e Vin Santo” which is inarguably Italy’s most famous welcoming tradition. What makes Vin Santo truly special is the natural winemaking process which gives it a unique taste.

FYI: Italian Vin Santo is not related to Vinsanto the Greek dessert wine, even though they do have a very similar name.

Vin Santo is a full-bodied, typically very sweet dessert wine with aromas of hazelnut, caramel, honey, tropical fruit, perfume and dried apricot. It’s one of those wines that sticks to the side of your glass and yet, when you taste it there’s this crazy balance between its delicacy and its intensity. Because of its unusually high sweetness, you don’t need much, just a 3 oz (75 ml) pour is enough to warm you while sitting in the snow.

Several theories as to how the name came to be named “Holy Wine.” Our favorite theory (and perhaps the most logical one) is based on the timing of the fermentation of Vin Santo grapes around Easter in the spring.
Charity Guild of St. Joseph
By Gerry Barone, president

Our president, Gerry Barone, conducted a meeting on September 19th and we discussed our 2019 St. Joseph’s Altar, which will be held at Holy Ghost Church at 6921 Chetwood, Houston, Texas 77081 (between Chimney Rock and Bellaire) on March 3, 2019. At this meeting we appointed Marylyn Colonnetta as our recording/ corresponding secretary. We will be baking fig cookies on Nov. 5th and 6th to be sold to help raise funds for our Altar. The club will have a Christmas Party at Ciro’s Italian Restaurant on the Reunion Group as we will be having a Spring Fling on April 6, 2019 at the ICCC at 1101 Milford, Houston, Texas 77006. If anybody has information on past Unite members that they are in contact with please call Gerry Barone. Details to follow if anyone is interest please call Gerry Barone at (713) 526-4239 or gtbarone@swbell.net. ■

Unite
By Gerry Barone, president

Hope everyone had a great time at the 40th Annual Festa Italiana. Thanks to all the members who donated their time to work. For all Unite members on Facebook, please join our Unite Group as we will be having a Spring Fling on April 6, 2019 at the ICCC at 1101 Milford, Houston, Texas 77006. If anybody has information on past Unite members that they are in contact with please call Gerry Barone. Details to follow if anyone is interest please call Gerry Barone at (713) 526-4239 or gtbarone@swbell.net. ■

Italy in America Association (IIAA)
By Betty Donellan, president

In October, we volunteered at the Festa Italiana and as always, had a great time and met many new people interested in our wonderful ICCC and Italy in America Association. We were proud to be a Bronze sponsor this year and hope you all noticed our beautifully bright banner. We had a lovely Happy Hour at the Hotel Chimney Rock and Bellaire) on March 10. We like to attend a meeting, contact Anna Messer at anna4ever29@att.net, or visit our website at www.ciaodiva.org. ■

Amiketos
By Minnette Carrabba | Rosalie Brandino, president

Louise Maida and Isabelle Rinando Hosted the September meeting of the Amiketos Club. The meeting was held at Christie’s Seafood on Westheimer and a wonderful seafood dinner was enjoyed. Members were happy to see each other since there were no meet-
gings all summer. President Rosalie Brandino Aquilina welcomed Rose- anne Leonetti and Vallerie Watson new members in the club. Each new member detailed their Italian background and willingness to become ac-
tive members. All members present introduced themselves. The hostesses surprised the members with individu-
al decorated cupcakes for dessert! The October meeting was hosted by Cynthia Marks and Josie Matranga at Pico’s on Kirby. A scrumptious Mex-
ican dinner was served. Cynthia and Josie decorated the dining tables with festive Halloween decorations and Cynthia made a wonderful home-
made coconut cake decorated for Halloween for dessert. The President asked for reports on the upcoming socials. Cynthia Marks gave a report on the girls Christmas party to be held at Sullivan’s steak house early in De-

Daughter’s of Italian Heritage
By Jennie Trapolino | Jamie Russo, president

What a beautiful Festa and what a beautiful weekend God provided for it. Once again the Daughters of Italian Heritage participated in the 40th Festa Italiano. Sponsored every year by the Italian Cultural and Community Center, DOIH is one of the volunteer organizations that makes the Festa a success. We made over 15,000 meatballs this year and manned the meatball sandwich booth. Glad to report, all meatballs are sold. Also, as volunteers, we check in the volunteers, and sell the tickets for all the booths. It is a fun time of the year for the daughters. We have a wonderful time working together, before and during the Festa. We have plenty of fun left for the year and more charitable events to come. Come join us at one of our monthly meetings. Guarantee you will a good dinner and make some wonderful new friends. We meet on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:00 P.M. at the Italian Cultural and Community 1101 Milford. If you would like to attend a meeting, contact Anna Messer at anna4ever29@att.net, or visit our website at www.ciaodiva.org. ■
Support the ICCC this holiday season

The Italian Cultural & Community Center relies on all of you, our community, to continue to thrive and bring the quality programs you have come to expect. Please consider helping us by participating in one of the four easy donation programs listed below. Become an active donor today and help your home away from home!

Your enrollment and support of the Kroger Community Rewards program will help the ICCC earn dollars to better achieve its mission to advance, celebrate and preserve Italian culture and heritage. Both new and current participants must enroll in the program every year, as required by the program. All supporters must have a registered Kroger Plus card account online to be able to link their card to the ICCC. Do you use your phone number at the register? Call 1-800-576-4377 and select option 4 to get your Kroger Plus card number. If you do not have a Kroger Plus card, they are available at the customer service desk at any Kroger. Register online at: www.KrogerCommunityRewards.com Every time an enrolled ICCC participant shops at Kroger using his or her Kroger Plus card, the ICCC will begin accumulating rewards. In addition, once a household member enrolls his or her card, all linked Kroger Plus cards within that household will begin earning funds for the ICCC.

Please don’t forget to enroll in some of the other programs that also help the ICCC earn extra dollars. Amazon-Smile is a simple and automatic way for you to support your favorite charitable organization (ICCC) every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at smile.amazon.com, Amazon will donate 0.5% of your eligible purchases to your favorite charitable organization. Whether you currently have an Amazon account or are opening a new account, visit AmazonSmile, follow the directions, and please make sure to select Italian Cultural & Community Center of Houston as your designated charity.

Randall’s Good Neighbor is a simple and automatic way for you to support your favorite charitable organization (ICCC) every time you shop, at no cost to you. Every time an enrolled ICCC participant shops at Randall’s using his/her Remarkable card, the ICCC will begin accumulating rewards. Visit today the Randall’s customer service desk and ask to have your Remarkable card set up with the ICCC, Charity code #3114, or call 1-877-Safeway and give them the Charity code to add to existing cards.

Gift matching programs double the value of your donation. Please don’t wait to take advantage of your company’s gift matching program. If you work for many of the oil and gas companies and literally hundreds of other companies, don’t miss out on this terrific opportunity to have your donation count twice as much. This works for membership payments also. Please check with your employer if they offer a matching program, it only takes mere moments to sign up for these programs. Please don’t wait.

Everyone at the ICCC thanks you for your continued support of our organization. See you soon, and happy holidays from our family to yours!
ITALIAN LANGUAGE CLASSES

for kids and teens
Saturdays | 9:30 - 11:30 am
Next session: December 1 - January 26

Fall Session 2:
Adults A1 Session 1 | 6:30 - 8:30 pm
Wednesday, November 7 - December 20

Italian Conversation | 6:30 - 8:30 pm
Thursday, November 1 - December 20

Italian for Travelers | 6:30 - 8:30 pm
Wednesday, November 7 - December 19

Winter Session:
Adults A1 Session 1 | 6:30 - 8:30 pm
Thursday, January 17 - February 28

Italian Conversation | 6:30 - 8:30 pm
Thursday, February 21 - April 4

Italian for Travelers | 6:30 - 8:30 pm
Wednesday, January 30 - March 6

Visit icchouston.com for more information
Email school@iccchouston.com or call 713-524-4222
ext 2 to register

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