

Volume 8
Issue 5
Summer 2026

*A note from the
Editor:*

*Addio
estate e
benvenuto
autunno!*

Ciao a tutti!

*Grazie mille to all
who contributed to
this edition.*

*There are some
great readings of
faraway travels
amongst our
members, amazing
family reunions,
and memories and
reflections on the
importance of
"Tradition"
written by a
beloved member
before her passing.
We cannot forget
the festivities as
every lodge came
together to
celebrate our great
Nation's 250th
Anniversary. It
was such a great
opportunity for
fellowship!*

*For future issues,
please submit
articles and
pictures to:
[colette.sciscilo@
gmail.com](mailto:colette.sciscilo@gmail.com)*

il Giornale

Newsletter for the Grand Lodge of Virginia
Order Sons & Daughters of Italy in America

A note from the Grand Lodge President

Cari amici,

In just a few days we will welcome the Fall season. Cooler temperatures, shorter days and those amazing Fall colors. I have to admit, I like this time of year. I don't do hot weather well. Sorry sun and hot weather lovers, just my personal feelings.

Well, as we write this article, plans for our 40th Biennial State Convention (April 2 & 3, 2027) are moving forward. The hotel, the Courtyard by Marriott / Williamsburg, has been selected and reserved. The caterer for our meals has been selected, and an agreement has been reached and dates confirmed. We will be using Sal's by Victor in Williamsburg. I've had a chance to eat there several times and the food is excellent. Their Italian bread is awesome, and the desserts are home made. Currently we are looking into entertainment. If you have an idea, feel free to send it to me (afunai@verizon.net). We hope to have registration information completed and sent out before the end of the year. Also, don't forget our convention program book. Place an ad and encourage your business friends to do the same. This book helps defray the expenses of the convention. In addition, we plan to continue the tradition of our bag auction on Friday evening and will again have donated raffle baskets to bid on.

We are encouraging every local lodge to fill their approved number of delegates. Each lodge will be assigned a certain number of delegates based on their membership numbers and the State Officers within their lodge.

The Garibaldi-Meucci Museum will be holding its 38th Annual Fundraiser Luncheon on November 7, 2026. The location is Li Greci's Staaten in Staten Island, NY. A flyer giving details will be included in this newsletter.

Be safe,

*Aldo Funai
Grand Lodge President*



ORDER
Sons and
Daughters
of Italy
IN AMERICA

Grand Lodge of Virginia Quarterly Meeting

The Grand Lodge of Virginia will meet for its quarterly meeting on *Sunday, September 20, 2026.*

The meeting will be held at the Giuseppe Verdi Lodge #315, 7342 Verdi Lane, Mechanicsville, VA. Council members and lodge presidents are asked to arrive no later than 10:30 a.m. for the Foundation meeting and meeting of the Lodge Presidents.

**Grand Lodge of Virginia
40th Biennial Convention
April 2 & 3, 2027
Williamsburg, Virginia**

Plans are being finalized for our next State convention, so please keep your eyes out for information and updates that will be emailed to the local lodges as well as disseminated through *il Giornale* over the next months. Planning can begin now in your lodge for designation of delegates, program ads (both personal and business), ideas for donated auction baskets, etc.

In the meantime, mark your calendars for the confirmed and secured date of April 2 & 3, 2027. Lodging will be at the Courtyard by Marriott/Williamsburg.



The Grand Lodge of Virginia's website address is: www.vaosdia.org

GARIBALDI-MEUCCI MUSEUM



NOVEMBER 7

2026

SAVE THE DATE



38TH ANNUAL FUNDRAISER LUNCHEON
Saturday, November 7, 2026
12:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Honoring
Joseph Sciame
Sons of Italy Foundation President
in recognition of his 40-year commitment
to the Garibaldi-Meucci Museum



ORDER
**Sons and
 Daughters
 of Italy**
 IN AMERICA

LI GRECI'S STAATEN
 697 FOREST AVENUE
 STATEN ISLAND, NEW YORK
 10314



**Sons of Italy
 Foundation**
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 Sons and Daughters of Italy
 IN AMERICA



GRAND LODGE OF VIRGINIA

USA 250th YEAR CELEBRATION



The Grand Lodge of Virginia extended an invitation to all five lodges in joining a day of Celebration of our country's 250th Anniversary of Independence.

On June 27, after the Grand Lodge of Virginia's quarterly meeting that was held at Verdi Lodge, members of all five lodges came together to Celebrate our Nation's 250th Anniversary. Attendance was great!! We had a total of 83 members, family and friends on hand, enjoying a July picnic of hot dogs, hamburgers, and side dishes consisting from pasta salads, potato salad, chips, baked beans, brownies, cookies, veggies and fruits, and more.

Although the weather was stiffling and kept us from enjoying outdoor activities, we thoroughly enjoyed fellowship with each other and sharing some of our heritage with one of the fireman from Hanover's local Fire Department. Many celebrations for our 250th Anniversary have been going on all year, time to still enjoy some!! Check out: VirginiaHistory.org/250Passport.

At the 250th Picnic celebration the GLVA awarded two scholarships.

Hailey Reynolds, was awarded the Linwood Sykes, Jr. Scholarship. She is a Senior at JMU majoring in Marketing, with a concentration in Digital Marketing. Hailey is the first recipient of the Linwood Sykes, Jr. Scholarship. Linwood was a member of Giuseppe Verdi Lodge. Hailey is the daughter of Rebecca Reynolds, members of GVL.

Mya Milan was awarded the John Asiello Scholarship (IHL). Mya will be attending Shenandoah University in Winchester, VA majoring in nursing. She is the granddaughter of Joann Robinson and niece of Melinda Lee, members of ITALO Lodge.



*Jim DeLucia and Aldo Funai
presenting the 2026 Linwood
Sykes, Jr. Scholarship to
Hailey Reynolds.*



*Jim DeLucia and Aldo Funai
presenting the 2026 John
Asiello Scholarship to
Mya Milan.*

Local Lodges

Peninsula Italian American Lodge #2145

April 2026 – August 2026

(Submitted by Beverly Amante)

The spring/summer seasons proved to be busy for members of PIAL.

On April 22nd we had a dining out at Saisaki Asian Bistro & Sushi Bar in Newport News. Fourteen of our members attended this event. It was a great time with good food and fellowship!



Right: the group minus Bob Mason who was taking the picture!



On April 26th we welcomed two new members, Jimmy Frasca and Wendy Frasca Pennington (brother & sister).

Left: Jimmy, Wendy and President Bob Mason

On May 2nd we participated in the Hampton Mosaic Festival (formally the Hampton Children's Festival). This is an event that we have participated in since its inception. The festival highlights the different cultures in our area. It is geared to all but concentrates on letting children explore the different cultures. This year our committee chair, Stasi Wipperman and her family and helpers, taught the children how to make flying machines and learn about Italian inventors.



Beth Wipperman with our display.



Finished flying machines.



Stasi Wipperman (center) with her parents at the picnic.

On May 17th, we held our annual picnic at the Bethel Fam Camp in Hampton. Once again, this year, the weather was great! That's two years in a row! Members feasted on sausage, peppers and onions, hot dogs & hamburgers supplied by the lodge. We also had sides and desserts supplied by the lodge members. Members played cornhole and lawn bocce.



On June 27th, members attended the GLVA 250th anniversary of the US at the Verdi Lodge in Richmond. A good time was had by all who attended. The food was great and Verdi members did a great job of decorating the lodge. The only drawback was the weather! It was way too hot to go outside and play any games.



*Above: seated: Bob, Jim & Terry
standing: Pat & Bev*

*Left: Lloyd, Diana, Jim, Anna
& Bob Mason*



On June 27th a small group of members attend the America's Tapestry Exhibit in Williamsburg. After attending the exhibit, the group went to an Italian restaurant for

Our August meeting brought us four new members!

We were happy to initiate Lori (Amyot) See and Joe Amyot (husband & wife), Ellen Humphrey & Phillip Varanavage (son of one of our members).



PIAL – Article from Mary Ann Canale

Brothers & Sisters, if you have been a member of the GLVA for a long time you may remember one of our more active members, Mary Ann Canale.

Mary Ann passed away on June 29, 2026, one day before her 86th birthday.

She joined the lodge in 1998 and, while she was living in Virginia, was a very active member of our lodge serving as President on several occasions among other things.

Mary Ann had many hobbies including painting and writing. She shared several of her writings with our lodge and now I would like to share one of those writings with the GLVA.

Note: Mary Ann gave me permission to share what she sent us.



MY OPINION

On Tradition

Mary Ann Canale
Montague, Michigan

Ciao, Amici,

Everything we do takes time and effort. Some of us have both time and effort, and others have varying degrees. It all comes down to how we choose to spend it.

Some of us were fortunate growing up with our grandparents, either living with them or in proximity. Those of us who had this experience, whether long-term or short, carry with us only a small part of our ethnicity, heritage, tradition, or whatever you want to call it.

For a long time, as an American/Italian, there are things that as a parent I wished I had carried on with my son, and that is the Italian Language. He may not speak it, but he can say words and or define them, because he heard them used by his grandmothers occasionally. So, we can say that teaching and learning stopped with them. My parents tried and tried to teach me, and I would not converse with them in Italian. So, some of their inadvertent teaching came from them, but only because, from a baby on up, my grandparents took care of me while my parents worked. I spoke Italian before English. Why? My grandparents did not speak English. I spoke with them, but when my parents got home, I refused. I think I was embarrassed for some reason. I was born in 1940, and it was not “Cool” to have immigrant parents of any ethnic group.

So, language aside, how do we carry on with things our families experienced and then pass on? **TRADITION**. You will find traditions vary from region to region in Italy, and most of them are religion-based.

I know some of you reading this have had a similar experience. In fact, how many people do you know who speak any Italian? Some of the only Italian-speaking members of PIAL 2143 during my time there were the D'Antonios, and the Brolli's. Thank God we still have Angela Tambone as a member. She got the ball rolling on Italian a long time ago despite my teasing her, and I thank her for that. They were all born in Italy.

My mother, Rose, was born in America; however, my father, Giovanni (turned into John), immigrated when he was 17. Translated from Italian, it means "Gift from God." He traveled alone and had an Aunt Felice (fay-lee-chay), which in Italian means "happy." He lived with her until he could make it on his own. I remember her as a dear, sweet lady, always calm. Now I recall some of the stories he used to tell, and we would have lots of laughs over them. Now that I make reference to Tradition, I will give you one that might scare you a little bit or a lot. When Felice died, I was around 10 or 12, and I witnessed a photo that was taken of her in the coffin.

They did this, as others did as well, to send back to their families in Italy. I'm not sure if it was to prove who it was or to prove they were dead.

Soon after my father came over, his sister, Antonietta (on-tone-ee-etta), in Italian means "priceless married and she settled into her life. They lived about 10 miles up the road from us.

It did not take long before these two women got together and decided that Giovanni (gio-von-ee), meaning "gift from God." Needed to be married. He was 38. They put their heads together and remembered my grandparents had an older daughter. Her name was Rose, although she went by Rosalie, Rosalina, and Rosalyn, with Rose her favorite choice. She never corrected anyone on it, and it ended up being her legal name. She was 29 at the time and the "match" was made. Fortunately, the decision was theirs. They announced their engagement, got married in 1939, and I came along in 1940.



**Rose Greco-Spelta Deceased
PIAL Member Year 2000 with
her daughter Mary Ann Canale
a member since 1998.**

**Easter bringing flowers to
church.**

Both parents worked blue-collar jobs. My mother went to work at age 14 in a button-making shop, next was sewing and making leather gloves, and lastly, as well as my father, she worked for Mohawk Carpet Mills with a great deal of respect for the work she had to do by hand. My dad worked in the machine shop, where they repaired their own machines, which was dirty and hard work. If they needed a new appliance, you either saved for it or bought it “a dollar down, a dollar a week. They worked hard and made do with little. I don’t think I suffered any because every Easter I had a new outfit, head to toe, and my father always went to the florist and bought me a corsage. One time, I asked my father why I did not have a sister, and his razor-sharp answer was, ” If you had a sister, you would not have all the pretty dresses we buy for you, and you would have to share.” Case closed, got my answer.

TRADITION

Food was always plentiful in our house. We always had something leftover, and it was for my father’s lunch. To this day, if I have a piece of steak leftover, I slice it thin, add sliced onion, a little salt, pepper, olive oil, and red wine vinegar. **TRADITION.** To die for!

The reason I started this writing was to complement Michelle Romanello and those who helped prepare a tradition of the St. Joseph Table. Michelle and I had emailed a while back, and I mentioned how we don’t celebrate it at the meeting in March anymore, and she said she would. Notice I speak as if I am there. I think we had prepared three of these tables in the past. One time, Jim DeLucia and I baked bread bigger than our heads. Barbara and Lee Jamilik brought several trays of St. Joseph cream puffs, known by several names depending on the region that makes them. I knew them as Zeppole di San Giuseppe. We set one table at the KOC, one at what is now Second Street and Vintners Cellar next to County Grill. And if I recall, it was the same people each of those times, but not me this time. I miss all that. I guess, as the young people say, “it’s my jam.” They probably don’t say that anymore, and there is something new. I can’t keep up with young people anymore.

She ended this article by asking us: “How do you keep tradition alive?” Something to think about!!

Roma Lodge #254

May 2026 – August 2026

(Submitted by Marie Mascaro Siebeking)

In May, Roma Lodge attended the Memorial Day Wreath Laying ceremony at Tidewater Veterans Memorial in Virginia Beach on May 25, 2026. After the wreath laying ceremony, the volunteers returned to the lodge



**LEFT
PRES. MARIE
MASCARO
SIEBEKING
RIGHT
SHARRON
DANGELO,
MILITARY
ESCORT FOR
WREATH
LAYING
CEREMONY**



TOP PICTURE: LEFT TO RIGHT: BUD MERRITT, DONO GAMBINO, JOHN LUIZZI, SHARRON DANGELO, V.P. ELLIE BOVE, LINDA ESPOSITO, JOHN GOSSNER, JIM DEANGLIO & DEE CLARK.

***Virginia Beach Memorial Day Ceremony
at the Tidewater Veteran's Memorial
on May 25, 2026***

Roma Lodge Scholarship eligibility must be high school seniors in the 2025-2026 academic years and will be full-time freshman college or trade school students. Applicants are limited to children or grandchildren of current Roma Lodge members in good standing.

At the June meeting we honored the Roma Lodge scholarship recipient, Isabella Szajnoga, granddaughter of Roma Lodge members, Immacolata and Stephen Pellegrino. Isabella was the Valedictorian and Class President of her Class at her Cox High School in Virginia Beach. She will attend the University of Virginia in the fall. Her application was outstanding; I am sorry she missed the submission date for the State Scholarship application.

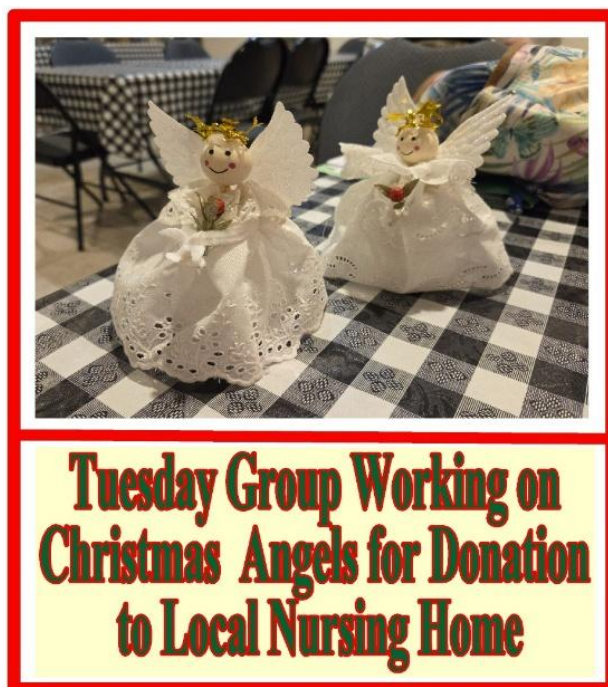


LEFT
Scholarship Chair-
Peter Langlands.
Awardee:
Isabella Szajnoga,
President:
Marie Siebeking
RIGHT
Isabella and Marie
presenting the
Scholarship Award
and Isabella
Finishing her
Acceptance Speech



TOP PICTURE: LEFT TO RIGHT: Isabella's Family, Including Her Grand Parents Roma Lodge Members, Immacolata and Stephen Pellegrino, Isabella and Pres. Marie

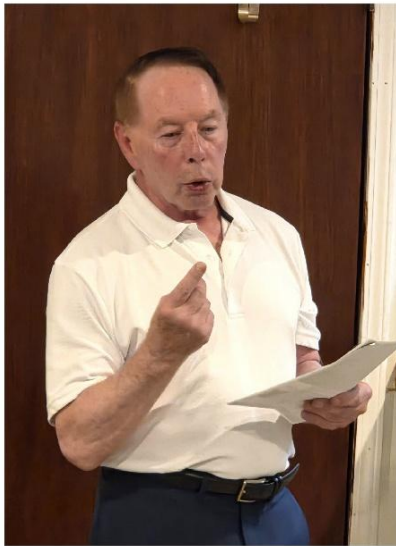
Our crafting group of ladies started their next charity project of making Angels for donations to one of our local Nursing homes in Virginia Beach. We hope to make 125 Angels by Christmas; we will be close.



At our August 2nd meeting, our member, Jim DeAnglio, made several varieties of pizzas and we provided salad and dessert for the meeting. The Pizzas were delicious and members really enjoyed them. Thank you again, Jim!



Also at our August meeting, Joseph T. Machek, Jr. the *Virginia Beach Wreaths across America* Sponsor & Location Coordinator, spoke about National Wreaths Across America Day to be held on December 19, 2026, at Princess Anne Memorial Park (Cemetery). If you are interested in sponsoring a \$17.00 memorial Wreath to be placed on a veteran's grave, or are interested in attending the service, more information will be forthcoming at our October meeting.



Joseph T. Machek, Jr.
Virginia Beach Wreaths Across
America Sponsor &
Location Coordinator for
Princess Anne Memorial Park



★ **December 19, 2026** ★
National Wreaths Across America Day



Help General MacArthur Memorial Post
 Number 392 honor local heroes!

Sponsor a wreath today to be placed on a
 veteran's grave this December at Princess Anne
 Memorial Park (Cemetery)

Scan the QR code to make a donation online or
 visit www.wreathscrossamerica.org/VA1094P



#RememberMe

Giuseppe Verdi Lodge #315

Summer 2026

(Submitted by Mary Louise Smith)

*Sharing a little with our “sister” lodges,
Congratulations were passed around to Verdi Members
this season.*

Verdi’s youngest member, Amber Ward, earned her Advanced Diploma from King William High School with a perfect 4.0 GPA and highest honors in the 100th graduating class from the school. She also completed her Associate’s Degree in Arts and Sciences from Rappahannock Community College, graduating Summa Cum Laude.

This fall, Amber will continue her education at Virginia Peninsula Community College, where she plans to pursue a second Associate’s Degree in Computer Aided Drafting and Design. Amber’s mother Julie, is also a member of Verdi Lodge, as are her grandparents, Mary Louise and Arthur Smith.



And member Cindy Vaughan said
“I Do”
to her sweetheart, Chris Fairchild on
May 23.

Members, Kim Wright
and Warren Wyatt,
tied the knot on April 12



Moving on...

A small group of Verdi members ventured out to visit The American Revolution Museum At Yorktown, spending a few hours at the museum and then hopping on the Trolley. We enjoyed the ride around the town visiting the historical monument and walking around Water Street stopping to enjoy lunch at the Yorktown Pub.



Encampment at the museum.



Victory Monument

Italian Heritage Lodge #2517

April 2026 – August 2026

(Submitted by Coletta Sciscilo)

The remainder of Spring and Summer brought us together for very fun activities, both outside and inside (the heat here in Northern Virginia was stifling at times – a complaint I suppose from all the lodges). We seem to have gotten through it all with great memories to remind us of our times together!

“The Cirelli Family 70th Reunion”

Submitted by Dennis & Eleanor Lillo

The Cirelli family held its 70TH family reunion and bowling tournament on April 19th, 2026, in Lodi, NJ. There were 113 attendees at the catered dinner and 60 bowlers competing in eight divisions based on two-year averages. Dennis Lillo’s grandmother Margaret was one of nine Cirelli children born of immigrant Italian parents, six boys and three girls, who started this tradition in 1955. The only time the reunion was not held was for two years due to the Covid epidemic. The banner depicting the Cirelli Family Tree was a new addition specially prepared for the 70th Reunion by cousin Alysia Dagrosa, one of Margaret’s great-granddaughters.





The Cirelli Family Tree Banner



The Lillo children and grandchildren

May 23, 2026 – Italian Bingo



Joey Scafetta at the Polish Russian Border
June, 2026



June 27, 2026 - Steve, Mike and Jim enjoy
the GLVA picnic and celebration of
America 250!

June 13, 2026 – Bocce Tournament & Picnic at the Lillo's

*And the 2026 Bocce
Champions are.....*

*Anthony, Diana, Daniel
and Alex Lillo!*



July 12, 2026 – Members met at the American Legion Post 1077 (Fairfax, VA) for their “All You Can Eat” Breakfast and bid *Buona Fortuna* to Alex Falsinotti as he enlisted in the US Army and headed to Fort Jackson, SC for his basic training that morning. After, we all attended a showing of “Young Washington”.



Alex was recognized by the many men and women veterans at the breakfast. Many of our members know Alex and we all wished him well, safe training and thanked him for his commitment to serving and protecting our county.

August 30, 2026 – Mission BBQ Luncheon and Afternoon Matinee of *Solo Mio*

We welcomed several guests for the afternoon's social. All agreed the food was fantastic as was the movie, including the Italian language, music and the beautiful scenes of Tuscany, Roma, Siena.



Scenes
from the
Palio di
Siena
from *Solo
Mio*.



Cena e Conversazione

Carissimi,

Thanks to everyone who contributed to the cena and the conversazione—to say nothing about the spectacular weather, the visiting hummingbirds or the grazing deer, we enjoyed one of our more pleasant meetings. We dined all'aperto starting with antipasti that included prosciutto and melon among much more, and continuing with Francesca's pasta, Betsy's chicken involtini, and June L's Mediterranean salad and zucchini contorno. The wine flowed as we uncovered, with Carlo and Betsy's guidance, the secret life of the verb "stare," heard and translated Joe's joke, caught up with Fran's eventful August and learned some kitchen vocabulary from June L. We closed with apple pie and homemade vanilla gelato. ~ Dennis



Buon cibo.

Buon vino.

Buon amici.



Italo American Citizens Lodge #1077

Summer 2026

(Submitted by Angel Ellis)

As the warmer weather months approached and members were enjoying vacations, Italo was happy that we welcomed three new members into our organization.

While most of us enjoy vacations not too far from home, our member Larry Brennan and wife Patty were able to enjoy a few weeks in Italy stretching the visitation to Italy to attend his niece's wedding, to a couple of weeks' vacation.

After the wedding, they journeyed by train to Florence for a couple of days. The surrounding hills filled with grapevines and olive groves were exactly what you picture when you think of Tuscany. From Florence, it was a four-and-a-half-hour train ride to Venice, where they traveled everywhere by water taxi and, of course, enjoyed a gondola ride — an absolute must visiting the city. Next, it was a five-hour train to Monterosso in the Cinque Terre region, enjoying the coastline and colorful villages, before taking another train back to Rome for a final four days of sightseeing. With more time in the city, they were able to explore much more and really appreciate Rome's history, food, and lively atmosphere. If you have not yet had the opportunity to visit, you may want to think about it for a future vacation.

After enjoying the trip to Mechanicsville, VA to enjoy the 250th anniversary with fellow GLVA members and celebrating Joann Robinson's granddaughter (Mya Milan) receiving the John Asiello Scholarship, Joann, her daughter Melinda and fiancée Tony, Italo lodge members, and family, drove to Brooklyn NY in July to attend the Brooklyn GIGLIO Festival 2026.

In August, Melinda and Tony became Mr. and Mrs. Tony Sanseverino!! Hip, Hip Hoorah and Congratulations to both.



Bella Italia !

(Submitted by Larry & Patty Brennan)

In June, Patty and I had the joy of traveling to Italy for my niece's destination wedding, which turned into a wonderful 16-day adventure. The wedding itself was three days in the beautiful region of Umbria, but we used the rest of the time to explore Italy's incredible cities, landscapes, and food.

We began with a day and a half in Rome, just enough time to take in the Vatican Museums and get a first taste of Italy's history and energy before hopping on a train to Orvieto. From there, we were picked up and brought to the wedding venue in Umbria — a stunning, peaceful area that made the celebration feel truly magical.

After the wedding, we continued our journey by train to Florence for a couple of days. The surrounding hills filled with grapevines and olive groves were exactly what you picture when you think of Tuscany.



From Florence, we took a four-and-a-half-hour train ride to Venice, where we traveled everywhere by water taxi and, of course, enjoyed a gondola ride — an absolute must when visiting the city.



Next, we took a five-hour train to Monterosso in the Cinque Terre region. We spent two relaxing days there, enjoying the coastline and colorful villages, before taking another train back to Rome for a final four days of sightseeing. With more time in the city, we were able to explore much more and really appreciate Rome's history, food, and lively atmosphere.



Traveling through Italy definitely means embracing train rides, cobblestone streets, and charming small hotels — many without elevators and with air conditioning that's a bit lighter than what we're used to in the States. We quickly learned that the best meals were found a few blocks away from the major attractions, where the food was more authentic and the prices far better. The only real challenge was the heat — June came with several heat advisories, so we'd recommend avoiding June, July, and August if possible.

Overall, it was a fantastic trip filled with beautiful sights, unforgettable experiences, plenty of walking, countless train rides, and more gelato than we care to admit. ☺

I would like to acknowledge those who assisted and advised me, contributed articles, pictures and ideas for this quarterly *il Giornale*:
Beverly Amante, Larry and Patty Brennan, Mary Ann Canale, Angel Ellis, Aldo Funai Jr., Dennis and Eleanor Lillo, Joseph Scaafetta Jr., Marie M. Siebeking and Mary Louise Smith.
Mostly, I am grateful for the support of *i miei amici italiani*! ~ c.s.