



ISSUE 621

DECEMBER 2025



MERRY
Christmas
AND
HAPPY NEW YEAR



ITALIAN AMERICAN
COMMUNITY CENTER



O HOLY NIGHT, THE STARS ARE BRIGHTLY
SHINING; IT IS THE NIGHT OF THE DEAR
SAVIOUR'S BIRTH.

BUON NATALE

NEWS & EVENTS

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SOCIAL CALENDAR

December

12/01/25 ~ Monday Grand Italian Buffet - 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm

12/07/25 ~ IACC Member Christmas Party - 4:00 pm

12/10/25 ~ IACC Women's League Christmas Party - 6:00 pm

12/13/25 ~ Experience Little Italy Christmas: Arthur Ave Bus Trip - 8:45 am (SOLD OUT)

12/15/25 ~ Monday Grand Italian Buffet - 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm

12/24/25 ~ Christmas Eve - IACC Membership Office Closed

12/25/25 ~ Merry Christmas - IACC Membership Office Closed

01/01/26 ~ Happy New Year - IACC Membership Office Closed

HAPPY NEW YEAR

UPCOMING EVENTS

▶ February 8, 2026 ~ Super Bowl 60 Party - 4:30 pm - 10:00 pm



Happy New Year



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

At first glance, Italian American associations may seem folkloric, old-fashioned, even overly Americanized. But look closer, and you'll find something more profound: a living expression of identity shaped across generations. These communities such as the IACC blend the traditions of our grandparents with the rhythms of American life, creating a space that feels timeless—neither entirely Italian nor fully American, but something beautifully in between.

This is the heart of Italian American life. It's for those who feel the pull of their roots, even if they've never set foot in Italy. For those who carry an Italian last name and a quiet affection for a country they know only through stories, recipes, and family traditions. And for those who simply feel at home in the warmth of shared culture.

This holiday season, **give more than a gift — give a legacy.** Surprise your adult children or grandchildren with a gift that lasts all year long — a 2026 membership to the Italian American Community Center. It's more than a present. It's a way to connect them to their roots, to each other, and to a vibrant community that celebrates culture, pride, and togetherness.

Join the Italian American Community Center — where tradition isn't just remembered, it's lived.

You already know the magic of being part of the IACC — now imagine passing that joy on to your adult children or grandchildren. A 2026 membership isn't just a thoughtful gift. It's a bridge to their heritage, a doorway to community, and a year filled with unforgettable experiences.

With membership, they'll enjoy:

- A full calendar of events, traditions, our swimming pool, bocce leagues, cooking, language, and chair yoga classes.
- A welcoming place to belong, celebrate, and grow.
- A living link to our shared spirit and story.

As a member, you've helped preserve and pass on Italian history, language, and values. You've supported cultural programs, community dinners, and events that bring generations together. Now, help us continue that legacy by inviting your family into the fold.

In a world of fleeting digital connections, we offer something timeless: real community. Shared meals. Heartfelt traditions. Laughter across generations. This is where lasagna meets legacy and where stories are passed down over Friday Nights at the Pavilion and bocce balls.

The future success of the IACC and our heritage starts with you and your family. Visit our website or call the membership office to enroll or gift a membership today. Let's make 2026 a year of connection, celebration, and cultural pride — together. Buon Natale e Felice anno nuovo a tutti!

JIM SANO
ITALIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY CENTER
PRESIDENT



I.A.C.C. OFFICERS

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THERESA LAJOY - OFFICE MANAGER

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WOMEN'S LEAGUE

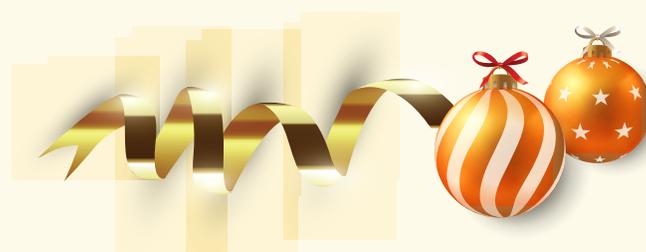
Again, this year the Women's League shared a "Friendsgiving" potluck dinner at our November meeting with a full turkey dinner and all the trimmings! It was a huge, delicious and very filling success and we extend a heartfelt thank you to all who contributed the fabulous food/desserts/drinks! The evening was a wonderful time to give thanks for the friendship, sisterhood, support and volunteerism the Women's League members continue to provide. In addition, we elected a new slate of officers for the coming year:

- ▶ **President:** Georgeann Greene
- ▶ **Vice President:** Maria DeNitto
- ▶ **Secretary:** Annette D'Auge
- ▶ **Treasurer:** Mary Lou Marando

Congratulations to our new Women's League officers. They each bring a level of knowledge, skill, and experience that will complement the goals and efforts of the group and will serve the Women's League well in providing fun and meaningful meetings and events.

As we wrap up the year and celebrate Christmas, our December meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 10th at 6:00 p.m. at the Barnsider Restaurant. The cost of the dinner will be \$45 per person and reservations can be made no later than December 7th with Terri Fazio at 518-452-9265 or by email at theodora.fazio1130@gmail.com. Dinner choices are 8 oz. top sirloin, chicken teriyaki or 10 oz. baked haddock. In addition, we will be doing our Christmas Grab Bag. Anyone who brings a grab bag gift can choose a gift from someone else. We limit the cost of the gifts to between \$15-\$20. It is optional to participate in the Christmas Grab Bag.

Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and best wishes for a safe and Happy New Year! We look forward to seeing you at our December meeting and remember the Women's League will not meet in January and February. See you all in March! Buon Natale!



IT'S TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!

Current I.A.C.C. Memberships expire Wednesday, December 31st, 2025
Membership renewal starts Friday, December 26, 2025.
New enrollment begins January 2nd at the I.A.C.C. Membership office.

REMEMBER TO SPREAD THE WORD TO YOUR FRIENDS

You may enroll by sending your invoice (with payment)
in or by calling the I.A.C.C. Membership Office at (518) 456-4222.
Cash, Checks, Credit and Debit cards are accepted.
(A 3% service fee will be added on credit card payments).

Thank You For Being A Member.

Here's To An Amazing 2026 At The Club!

Ivrea Industrial City Of The 20th Century

PART I

BY JIM SANO



Ivrea, a historic town in northern Italy's Piedmont region along the Dora Baltea river, boasts a rich heritage dating back to Roman times. Its picturesque center features medieval architecture and bustling cafes. A highlight is Ivrea Castle, a 13th-century fortress offering panoramic views of the town and its surroundings. Ivrea is famous for hosting the oldest annual carnival celebration in Italy, the Carnival of Ivrea, which includes the "Battle of the Oranges." This historic reenactment involves throwing oranges in the streets and highlights the carnival season. With a population of 24,000 residents, Ivrea is 253 meters above sea level, approximately 54 kilometers north of Turin.

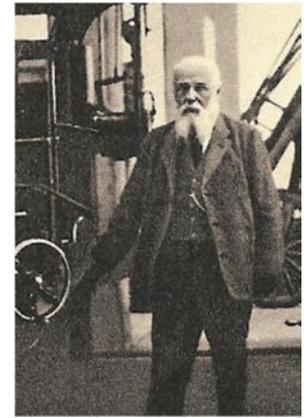
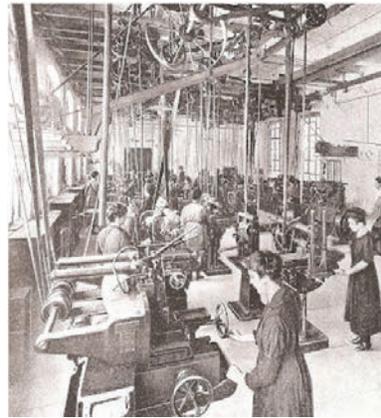
Ivrea's modern significance lies in its close association with the Olivetti corporation, established in the early 20th century. Olivetti, renowned for manufacturing typewriters, calculating machines, computers, and office equipment, revolutionized urban planning and architecture in the city. The Olivetti factory in Ivrea transcended mere production, embodying the ideals of the Community Movement initiated by Olivetti in 1947. This movement introduced a new economic model that redefined the relationship between companies and workers. Ivrea was named a UNESCO World Heritage

Site in 2018 for its industrial significance and 20th-century urban development.

The site spans 71 hectares and features 27 Rationalist-style buildings dating from the 1930s to the 1960s. These Olivetti buildings and industrial complexes are the focal points of the UNESCO designation, showcasing various facilities for production, administration, social services, and residential purposes. Olivetti's innovative approach to manufacturing and architecture revitalized the region's development, fostering technological advancement and prosperity. Ivrea is a testament to Olivetti's enduring legacy of progress and innovation.

Olivetti and the Industrial City of the 20th Century

In July 2018, the inclusion of "Ivrea, a city of industry in the 20th century" onto the UNESCO World Heritage list was a momentous occasion, honoring the incredible efforts of Adriano Olivetti to advance industrial, social, urban, and architectural initiatives. As a city of industry in the 20th century, Ivrea represents a remarkable approach to the swift transformations of industrialization. Ivrea is considered one of the most significant industrial "utopias" of the 20th century, comparable to socially conscious models of industrial development in America and Europe.



Adriano Olivetti was a transformative leader who turned his company into a visionary factory. He championed alternative industrial models and architecture that placed the well-being of citizens at the forefront. Shaped by Olivetti's influence and Adriano's vision, the company aimed to establish a utopian community that harmonized production with the needs of its residents after World War II. This transition prioritized the welfare of citizens over mere economic growth and employment opportunities, positioning Ivrea as a model for modern industrial cities that strive to tackle the challenges of rapid industrialization.



The Story of the Olivetti Company - Early Years

The saga of the Olivetti family finds its roots in America. Camillo Olivetti (1868-1943) journeyed to the United States in 1893. Accompanied by his mentor, the renowned engineer and scientist Galileo Ferraris, they visited the World Columbian Exhibition in Chicago. This exhibition showcased the latest technological advancements driving America's rapid industrial growth, leaving a profound impression on Camillo Olivetti. Upon Camillo Olivetti's return from America, he founded an innovative industrial company that manufactured electrical measuring instruments. This endeavor started in 1907 when Ivrea was just an overgrown village. The Olivetti factory, situated half a mile from the town in an open field, initially employed only four inexperienced workers who received training from Camillo Olivetti in tool usage. Camillo Olivetti encountered a significant delay in establishing his typewriter factory, during which

time he conducted thorough preliminary studies over two years. By 1909, typewriter production commenced, leading to the establishment of "Ing. C. Olivetti and Co." in Ivrea. This venture propelled the company to international recognition, solidifying its position as a pioneer of industrial innovation in Italy. Camillo Olivetti's dedication to crafting a unique typewriter led to the meticulous design of every aspect. Workers brought the Olivetti M1 typewriter to life, incorporating new features that improved speed and performance. Notably, Olivetti's design for key and typebar linkage allowed for an adjustable motion of the typebars, enhancing the typewriter's functionality. Using forged steel in the moving parts also improved the machine's functionality.

The debut of the first Olivetti typewriter on April 29, 1911, at the Turin World's Fair marked a significant milestone in the company's history. Two typewriters were showcased in the Newspaper Pavilion, accompanied by demonstrations of the machine tools used in their production, highlighting Olivetti's commitment to innovation and craftsmanship. Interestingly, Camillo took more pride in demonstrating his innovative methods and modern approach to manufacturing than in showcasing the final product to the public.



The official fair catalog listed Olivetti as the "first and only typewriter factory in Italy" and its product as "a first-class typewriter, patented by C. Olivetti in Italy, France, Germany, England, Austria, Switzerland, and the United

States." The typewriter featured an original design, legible characters, a standard keyboard, a two-colored

ribbon, a decimal tabulator, a backspace, multiple margin adjustment, modern workmanship, and absolute precision. Shortly after the fair ended, Olivetti was awarded a contract to provide the Italian Ministry of the Navy with 100 typewriters.



In 1911, Ivrea workers at the Olivetti typewriter factory manufactured the Olivetti M1. This clunky cast iron typewriter weighed approximately 38 pounds and had 42 keys divided into four rows, eight tabulator keys, and a space bar. Italy's postal service ordered 50 more Olivetti typewriters. Camillo expanded by opening sales branches in Milan, Genoa, Rome, and Naples. By 1914, the Olivetti factory grew from 20 workers producing 20 typewriters weekly to 100 workers making four machines daily. Eventually, 6000 M1 typewriters were produced, followed by the M20 model.

In 1924, 400 employees produced around 4,000 machines per year. By 1926, production had doubled to 8,000 machines with 500 employees. In 1929, production increased to 13,000 typewriters.



The Story of the Olivetti Company - 1930's - 1960's

Adriano Olivetti was born in Ivrea in 1901 and started his career in his father's factory as a young boy. His father's progressive ideas brought him up in an atmosphere of innovation and social reform. In 1924, he obtained a chemical engineering degree. The following year, he journeyed to the US to explore innovative production methods and learn about company organization from Henry Ford in Detroit. He later implemented Ford's "Taylorist" system to enhance production efficiency in his family business. In 1926, Adriano Olivetti began



his career at the factory as a worker, eventually rising to plant manager in 1933. He oversaw significant milestones during his tenure, including introducing Olivetti's first portable typewriter, the MP1. By 1938, Olivetti had ascended to the role of president. Beyond his achievements in business, Olivetti was a staunch advocate of Modernism in architecture and politics, leaving a legacy in both fields. Having worked in the factory, Olivetti understood the tedium and burden of repetitive tasks. He aimed to free workers from this degrading slavery and sought ways to lighten the burden of work. When Adriano took over the company, emphasis was placed on industrial innovation and architectural experimentation inspired by the Modern Movement. In 1934, he commissioned two young Milanese architects, Luigi Figini and Gino Pollini, to create a new urban plan for Ivrea, the model industrial city. Adriano's strong commitment led to the fusion of technology and socialist ideals.

Olivetti improved working conditions by offering cultural and welfare programs, such as books, courses, inventions, and artwork, transforming assembly line work from discomfort to fulfillment. He also advocated for social reform and inclusion, providing his factory workers with amenities like a cinema and library. The Olivetti M20, a new model, was introduced with keys for uppercase and lowercase letters, a return key, and more. Despite these additions, it still weighed 38 pounds. The company was manufacturing 13,000 units annually and started exporting to foreign markets. During this time, they also unveiled the M40 model before World War II. Adriano was an absolute powerhouse when it came to modernizing Olivetti. He worked tirelessly to implement new, innovative methods, reorganize management, and expand the sales network. His dedication to the company was truly remarkable!

Although against the rise of fascism initially, he began a brief relationship with the regime. The prohibition on foreign product importation imposed by fascism favored the dizzying growth of Olivetti sales. As a



The plan aimed to provide affordable housing, focusing on improving worker's social lives and ensuring that each building complements the landscape and it's surroundings.



converted Jew, he clashed with authorities under Mussolini's regime. The racial laws and the outbreak of the Second World War convinced Adriano to initiate subversive activities. In '43, he ended up in prison, accused of having warned the Americans not to trust the government. Once freed, he spent the last two years of the war in exile in Switzerland, supporting the resistance and assisting the Americans. Without access to a typewriter, he manually wrote his most significant work, "The Political Order of Communities." This work proposed blending urban planning with politics, promoting self-governing communities of 75,000 to 150,000 residents. He aimed to replace large factories and congested cities with balanced lifestyles, striking a balance between central and local authorities. Olivetti expanded his concepts of human-sized capitalism to include not only assembly lines but also amenities such as canteens, clinics, kindergartens, libraries, adult education courses, exhibitions, and conferences to promote cultural values and understanding. Olivetti was determined to create a model of a different work organization that blended scientific and humanistic culture at the Ivrea factory.

Adriano Olivetti returned to Ivrea after his WWII exile and resumed control of the factory. In the next 30 years, Adriano Olivetti transformed Olivetti from a small family business into a massive company with factories in five countries and distribution networks in over 100 countries. The town of Ivrea also changed, evolving from a small provincial town into a major manufacturing hub, attracting engineers, designers, and workers from all over Italy. The company's expansion doubled the town's population between the 1930s and 1960s. New factories were constructed, and Olivetti initiated a significant transformation by installing new windows in the buildings. The windows allowed workers to see outside and passersby to observe the activities inside. The company introduced various amenities, including cafeterias, playgrounds, debate rooms, film screening rooms, and libraries with extensive collections. They provided quality healthcare, social services, and free recreational facilities. On-site education and trade school courses were available. Cultural activities,

such as performances by actors, musicians, and poets, were organized during lunch breaks. Olivetti invested in nursery schools, the first hospital in Ivrea, and mountaintop retreats for workers' children. The company offered excellent benefits, including nine months of paid maternity leave for women, wages almost 20% higher than the national average, Saturdays off, and reduced weekly working hours from 48 to 45. Retirement was secured with substantial pensions, emphasizing dignity. In July, employees engaged in small-scale farming, reconnecting with their agrarian roots and bridging the urban-rural divide. The company hired renowned architects to construct modern homes and apartments for its employees, underlining their vision of quality living.

Additionally, Olivetti financed the initial master plans for the city and its surroundings. In 1959, a new plan for Ivrea was approved, involving integrated residential areas, a ring road, a new bridge, industrial expansion, and the revitalization of the historic center. Adriano Olivetti's vision of creating a more "human" industrial city in Ivrea, emphasizing holistic city planning, was on the verge of realization. His innovative holistic approach to employee welfare and commitment to design transformed Ivrea into a thriving company town, prioritizing the well-being of its workers and setting a new standard for industrial urbanism.

Adriano Olivetti's vision encouraged harmony and progress in corporate communities and criticized the materialistic expansion of Italian cities without a cohesive plan. Olivetti's factory quickly became the most modern structure in Italy. Olivetti is seen as a symbol of pride in Italy's history, particularly in its role in the country's post-war economic success, making it the world's eighth-largest economy.

Recognizing the importance of politics and urban planning in his vision, Olivetti established a political party called Movimento Comunità. He was elected mayor of Ivrea in 1956 and later became a member of the Italian parliament. Olivetti aimed to promote his ideas of integrating business, politics, and worker well-being to create a progressive society in Italy and beyond.

THIS ARTICLE WILL CONTINUE IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

SUPER BOWL 60 PARTY



SUPER BOWL


Cost: \$45 for members
\$50 for non members


Doors open: 4:30 pm

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 8

14 FOOT HD SCREEN

RAFFLES & PRIZES

Pre-Game Buffet: 5:30 pm

STATION ONE

Dip Station:

Buffalo Chicken Dip,
Spinach Artichoke Dip,
and Taco Dip

STATION TWO

Classic Italian Station:

Chicken Parmesan
Eggplant Rollatini
Penne ala Vodka
Garlic Bread

STATION THREE

Gourmet Hot Dog Station:

Hebrew National Hot Dogs

Toppings:

Meat sauce, cheese sauce, Ketchup,
Mustard, and relish.

Halftime Buffet

Pizza, Wings
Cheeses and Crackers
Dessert, Freshly Popped Popcorn

Complimentary Beer, Soda, Coffee & Tea
A cash bar is available.

RESERVATIONS REQUIRED.
TO MAKE A RESERVATION CALL
(518) 456-4222 OR VISIT
WWW.ITALIANAMERICAN.COM



IACG MEMBER CHRISTMAS PARTY

**DECEMBER 7, 2025
4:00PM TO 7:00PM**

**ENJOY A FAMILY -STYLE DINNER, DESSERT,
CHRISTMAS MUSIC AND HOLIDAY FUN!**

FREE FOR MEMBERS

GUESTS OF MEMBERS ARE WELCOME

CHILDREN | \$15.00 ADULTS | \$25.00

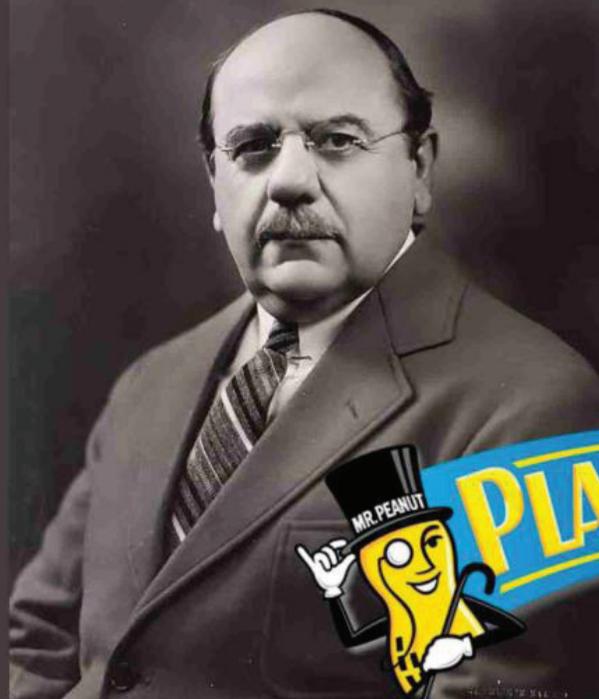


**MEMBER
EXCLUSIVE**



BY JOE SANO

PLANTER'S PEANUTS - NOW THAT'S ITALIAN



What does a ten-year-old do when he leaves his native Italy and ends up living with his maternal uncle in Scranton, PA? Answer:

He goes to work!

Amadeo Obici was born on July 15, 1877, to Pietro Ludovico and Luigia Carolina Sartori Obici in the small town of Oderzo, near Venice, in northern Italy. Fatherless as a seven-year-old, his mother emigrated to her brother's home in Scranton, Pennsylvania.

Earning a dollar a week working in a cigar factory, young Amadeo learned to read and write English. As a fifteen-year-old with a promise of free room and board, he moved to Wiles-Barre to sell fruit at a friend's stand. He fancied this type of work rather than the grueling anthracite mining opened to most Italian immigrants in that area. His hard work earned him a small nest egg that he used to open a small nut and fruit stand.

As many of us know, it can be pretty frustrating opening a roasted chestnut. Young Amadeo sought an easier way but getting castagne open was not easy. He also had peanuts on his stand.

He began to research the peanut, which is a legume, or a plant with pods that split open when the seeds are ripe. The ripened seed is the peanut. Believing he could increase his profits if his customers didn't have to crack open the shell and peel off the skin of the peanut, Obici purchased a \$4.50 peanut roaster and invented his own method of blanching whole roasted peanuts. Within a



few years, he adopted the title of "Peanut Specialist," and began peddling his product from a horse and wagon to other storekeepers. His early success inspired other entrepreneurial endeavors. In his early twenties, Obici mortgaged his fruit stand for \$39,000 and opened a combination soda fountain and oyster bar. Above the restaurant, he installed a roaster to continue expanding

his peanut business. Obici quickly recognized that the peanut market had a bright future and began envisioning an even greater market than the local economy offered.

At the age of 29, in 1906, he entered into a partnership with his future brother-in-law Mario Peruzzi.

The partners incorporated their business as Planters Nut and Chocolate Company and expanded their line of merchandise to include chocolate-nut bars, chocolate covered peanuts, and various chocolate confections.

Their focus remained on peanuts. Selling branded, whole salted nuts in penny and nickel bags on a large scale would be their future.

It was an extremely ambitious venture given the profit margins being small. Obici, however, increased his profits by concentrating on brand creation, and combining all phases of production, marketing and sales.

Obici also found ways to improve his product and streamline his business operations. In 1910, for example, Planters adopted the grease-proof glassine bag/ later to cellophane , which solved one of the company's major packaging problems and kept peanuts fresher longer. Obici invested \$25,000 to build a shelling and cleaning mill to process raw peanuts in Suffolk, Virginia, so he no longer had to rely on suppliers to prep his product. Shortly after, he introduced Planters "Nickel Lunch," a two-ounce package of whole blanched nuts selling for 5 cents, and the demand for Planters Peanuts became even greater. That was his goal. "Everybody has a nickel!"



country. Obici became a generous benefactor to his adopted community, endowing a hospital in memory of his beloved wife after her death in 1938.

Planters' confection and manufacturing processes expanded after the establishment of the Suffolk plant. In 1921, a second factory was built in San Francisco, California, to capitalize on a growing market on the West Coast. Four years later, a third manufacturing plant was established in Toronto, Canada, and a national advertising campaign was launched to familiarize Canadians with the product. The company's national headquarters, with its executive offices, remained in Wilkes-Barre.

When Obici died in 1947, he headed a \$60 million corporation consisting of seventy retail stores and four manufacturing plants, employing 5,000 people. Following his ideas for growth, his leadership team, realizing the value of a children's market, capitalized on the Mr. Peanut product line. By 1951, mail orders for such items as stuffed dolls, toothbrushes, backpacks, savings banks, and rings had exploded to between 25,000 and 30,000 a week.

It was during the 1950s that Planters brought the Mr. Peanut character to life. "Mr. Peanut" could be found outside their retail stores giving away samples. I for one remember the smell of fresh roasted peanuts at the Planter's store on the corner of State and Pearl Streets with Mr. Peanut handing out samples.



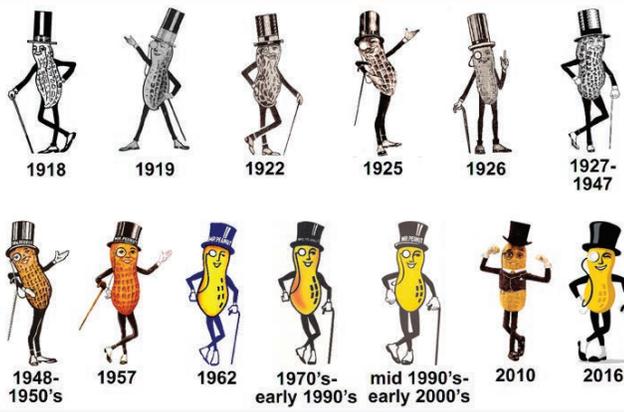
In 1961 when Standard Brands bought Planters for \$20 million, it began to phase out its retail business, concentrating instead on supermarket sales. Wilkes-Barre, no longer the national headquarters for the multimillion-dollar peanut company, became just one of many distribution centers across the nation. Business continued to decline in the 1970s with a heightened awareness of food allergies and fad diets. Peanuts were banished from the diets of many Americans who preferred low-fat foods.

Another corporate merger took place in 1981 when Standard Brands and Nabisco combined to form Nabisco Brands. When Nabisco merged with R. J. Reynolds in 1985, the days of the old Planters headquarters were numbered.

Today Planters Peanuts is part of Altria's Kraft Food Chicago based division. If you are lucky enough to still have any of its promotional products, including a Mr. Peanut doll, bank or coloring book...you have a desired collectable.

Mr. Peanut remains the most recognized trademark among all snack foods. So, when you see Mr. Peanut, the vision of Amedeo Obici, an Italian immigrant who realized his American Dream remember, "That's Italian"! □

MR. PEANUT THROUGH THE YEARS



Obici, searching for new and novel marketing techniques, held a contest to find a logo for the company. Anthony Gentile, a 13-year-old Virginia student, submitted the winning drawing of an animated peanut and won \$5. Modified over the years, the ever-dapper Mr. Peanut eventually added a top hat, white spats, ebony cane, and monocle to his distinctive ensemble. The new logo proved to be a stroke of marketing genius. Mr. Peanut appeared on every package and container produced by Planters.

Now Obici flooded the market with Mr. Peanut marketing knick-knacks in the form of toys and books targeted at young consumers. He believed that marketing to children could guarantee an adult market for years.

After he married Lousie Musante, they moved near his plant in Suffolk, Virginia, the heart of Virginia peanut

GO GET THE FISH.....



THE FEAST OF SEVEN FISHES

It's December 1960. It's cold and Madison Avenue sidewalks present a challenge of ice, snow and slush. Regardless, I'm charged with the mission to retrieve the baccala from Roma Importing just below St. Anthony's Church.

I was told, "Joe Joe goes get the fish." So, neither rain, nor sleet nor snow nor gloom of night will keep me from my mission (kudos to our dad who carried the mail for years). I got the fish!

Well, the years have rolled by and I'm sure there are few 12-year-olds today that are sent out to the store to "get the fish" but the fish must be bought because the "Feast of the Seven Fishes" will soon be here.

I can't remember if we had all seven fishes years ago but I'm sure we got close. Truth be told, I have never again had baccala and you can have all mine this Christmas Eve too.

Regardless, The Feast of the Seven Fishes is celebrated each year at my brother Jim's home. It's a lot of work for my sister-in-law Nancy and the family appreciates and loves her for all she does.

One of the most joyful times of the year is quickly approaching, and we can feel it in the air. Can you feel it? It's a blessed time when we gather with our family to celebrate. It's the perfect opportunity to be with the people you love, to hang out with them, create new memories, and to, of course, eat delicious food.

Why do Italian Americans celebrate Christmas Eve with a special fish feast? It's not an official holy day or celebration of the Catholic Church. Some believe that The Feast of the Seven Fishes tradition was invented in Italy. The feast grew out of politics, poverty, faith and family traditions. Before the unification of Italy in 1861, the various regions had their own governments and local traditions. The southern regions were the poorest areas in the country, yet fish were plentiful and often a diet staple. As poverty swelled in those regions the people saw America as a new hope, a new beginning.

Others believe that the tradition has more Italian-American roots. Regardless, the tradition remains alive in the Italian South and Sicily. The feast known as La Vigilia is more prevalent in most English-speaking territories where Italians celebrate their heritage. Their traditions came with them and grew in importance as a memory of the life they left behind.

This tradition also has a lot of logic behind it when you think about where it originated. In the south of Italy, as well as in Sicily, there's plenty of fish. Given an abundant selection, you can only imagine the types of fish they used for making the best seafood dinner.

Don't think that the dishes were simple and that they were only eating plain fish. The seafood dinners were, in fact, feasts featuring many fish dishes with fantastic preparation and delicious sides. The strictest adherents to the seven-fishes tradition will tell you that indeed there should be seven fish on the dinner table, but for the sake of simplicity, this author suggests that one consider all seafood, including shellfish, to count toward your final fish tally. Some also believe that baccala and calamari are two must haves in your 7 seafood choices. Those who practice this tradition think that the key is to cook seven different kinds of seafood by spreading out the dishes throughout the meal; instead of preparing seven whole fish for what would be an excessively large main dish spread. One could choose to offer perhaps three small appetizers, a soup, pasta, then entrée plus a side salad, each with seafood as the focus to reach your threshold of seven fishes.

Now the tradition of eating fish on Christmas Eve comes from the Orthodox and Catholic Christians practice of abstinence or not eating meat on the eve of some holidays, including Christmas. There are many theories on why the number "7" was the required number of fish dishes. Some say that it is a reminder of the seven sacraments, or possibly the seven deadly sins. Possibly the 7 days traveled by Mary and Joseph to reach Bethlehem. Could it be a remembrance of the 7 days of creation or that there are 7 days in a week? Who knows?



Why should I eat fish on Christmas Eve?

A simple answer could be because it's easy and quick to make. I think a few of our readers would argue that point. While the ease of preparation

can be argued there are so many ways fish dishes can be prepared. Add the versatility of preparing and serving a fish dish as an appetizer, in a salad, as a pasta or main course and you will be very busy in the kitchen. Of course, let's not forget the health benefits of fish and shellfish, rich in vitamins, minerals, and omega-3 fatty acids that are crucial for a healthy heart, strong bones, a developing brain, and a strong immune system. Couple that with fish dishes that are mouthwatering and delicious, and almost nobody can resist it. How about: fried calamari/ or in salad, baked salmon, any baked or broiled whitefish, fried cod, fried or raw shrimp, deep fried scallops, marinated eel, clams, cod fish balls, seafood salad, octopus' salad, puttanesca with anchovies, lobster, crab cakes, to name just a few choices without even mentioning putting them in a tomato base with pasta.

Since I still don't care for the baccala, I've been trying, unsuccessfully, to convince my family that sushi or a spicy tuna roll is an acceptable fish dish. I'm not successful yet but I'll keep trying.

So, why not experiment a little and do something differently? Ask your family what they think about a 7 fish seafood dinner for this year's Christmas Eve and see how they react. They might be thrilled! □



CARING & SHARING

DECEMBER

Birthdays

Lynn Aronowitz

Lucy Bremm

Stephen Bubonia

Thomas Burke

Jeanne Ciampino

Joanne Criscione McTague

Antonio Del Pozzo

Laurie Elmendorf

Marie Faccioli- Erkes

Stacey Galvin

Richard Kaplan

David Latina

Anna Marie Logrippo

Mary Ellen Macri

Michele Mealy

Melissa Nardolillo

Sharon Patrei

Maran Person

Jamie Placito

Dan Powell

Joseph Relyea

Joseph Restifo, Jr.

Peter Scavullo

Diann Scialdo

Maggie Smith

Susan Supliski

Maryellen Tedesco

Terry Weinman

CONDOLENCES

Condolences to **Gretchen VanValkenburg** on the passing of her son, **James**.

Condolences to **Bill and Pat Fluty** on the passing of their son, **Eric**.



Congratulations to **Maeve Joyce** on winning the Class C sectional cross country title and her second-place finish in the NYS Cross Country Championships. Her parents are Ray and Cara McCann Joyce.



Congratulations to **Loughlin Rizzo** and the Guilderland Boys Soccer team on being sectional champs and making it all the way to the NYS Championship semifinals. His parents are John Rizzo and Anne Marie Lizzi.

Congratulations to **Mary Rozak**, Director of Communications for Albany County, on being named the 2025 Capital Region MARCOM Awards Marketing/Communications Practitioner of the Year.



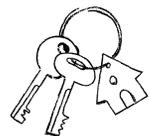
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Mangia Bene E Vivi Bene!

By FRANK ZEOLI



Dried Beef Bread Dip is always a winner at any holiday party or gathering! The unique flavor combination of dried beef, real mayonnaise, sour cream, and dill is always a crowd-pleaser! My grandmother made this for every holiday party for most of my childhood. It's an easy, delicious appetizer to serve anytime, but especially around the holidays.

Dried Beef Bread Dip



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Remove the center from the loaf of bread and cut it into chunks for dipping.
2. Chop dried beef into a thin dice.
3. In a mixing bowl, add the mayonnaise, sour cream, dried beef, dill, parsley, and onion flakes. Blend all the ingredients.
4. Cover the bowl with plastic film and refrigerate for 2 hours or more. Refrigerating allows the flavor to develop.
5. Once chilled, add the dip mixture into the hollowed-out bread and serve on a platter with the cut bread around the perimeter for dipping.

Enjoy!

PREP TIME: 15 MINUTES | CHILL TIME: 2 HOURS

INGREDIENTS

- 1 round loaf of rye or pumpernickel bread
- 1 cup of mayonnaise
- 24 oz sour cream
- 2 - 2.5 oz bottles of dried beef
- ¼ cup of dried onion flakes
- ¼ cup of dried parsley
- ¼ cup of dried dill weed



Look for more recipes in the next edition of the SIAMO QUI

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