



# OH BROTHER, WHERE ART THOU

The odds of a sixty seven year old adoptee finding his birth mom is slim. For George Bradley, finding her alive was as wonderful as it was unlikely. In 2012 he met his mother, Santa Di Dolce Steele, for the first time. It was celebrated by both families who are now united. She lived in peace and with joy until she passed in March of 2016.

George Bradley initially contacted the Harris family in October of 2012; Santa Steele's son-in-law took the call. George identified himself as Santa's son and proceeded to give him details surrounding his birth. Rusty discussed the shocking revelation with his wife Debbie, cautious about how revealing the news might affect her eighty-seven year old mother. Debbie was shaking from head to toe about the news, having absolutely no idea whether any of this was true.

George explained that he had no intention of creating any disturbance in anyone's life and that he would understand if Santa did not want to speak with him. He explained that several years earlier his children began to encourage him to try to locate his birth mother. His daughter, Stefanie, did the initial investigative work and eventually hired a private agency to complete the task. The agency took just two days to locate his mom and, miracle of miracles, she was alive. They were able track Santa to Roselle Park, New Jersey where she was living with her daughter's family.

Photographs that George sent showed a strong resemblance to Santa and her family. With no doubts Debbie approached her mother with the news. Her mom was not surprised and sensed something was up because of a strange phone call she had received the day before asking her to confirm her identity and questioning if she had given birth on May 28, 1947 in the Home for Unwed Mothers and Wayward Women in Clinton, New Jersey.

Santa fell completely apart at the news that George, who was living in Nebraska, had contacted them and through her tears, told Debbie and Rusty that she was so sorry and was so embarrassed. They reassured her that she had nothing to be embarrassed about. Debbie asked her whether or not she was willing to take a call from George and she was excited and almost screamed as she declared, "yes!!"

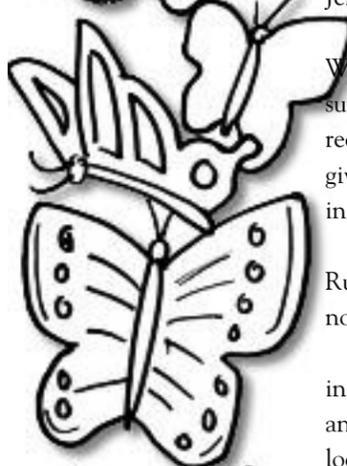
Through Debbie, George assured his mom that he had a good life. He grew up in Kenilworth and Woodbridge, New Jersey. He attended college in South Dakota and moved to Randolph, Nebraska where he taught high school English. It was there that he met and married his wife, Sherry, and raised their three children, Stefanie, Nick and Christopher. It was after hearing that George was a retired high school teacher that Santa looked up at Debbie and said, "I did the right thing, didn't I? I would have never been able to give him that kind of life."

Santa called George and it was the first time that she was able to speak with her son since the day of his birth, when, shortly afterward, he was taken from her and she would not see him again for another 67 years.

Plans were made for the entire Bradley family to come to New Jersey to meet Santa and the family. On December 2, 2012, George and Sherry made the trip from Nebraska, joined by their daughter, Stefanie and her husband and two daughters, Christopher and his wife, Laura, and son, Nick with his daughter. The next five days were a whirlwind with sisters and brother meeting, nieces and nephews meeting their newfound uncle and his family, cousins meeting one another and friends of the family meeting and welcoming George and his entire family. There were daily lunches and dinners together and the trip was celebrated with a huge gathering in Michelino's Restaurant on the night before the Bradley's were scheduled to return to Nebraska.

Since 2012, George and Sherry have visited regularly, as well as three of his sisters making the trip out to Nebraska. This was, to Santa's family, the grandest finale for her. She was finally freed from the secret that she had kept to herself for all those years. She was able to pass away knowing that her son was fine and all the unanswered questions about him were now answered. For George, the void was filled. He had met and gotten to know his biological mother and the four sisters that he did not know he had. It filled the lives of all involved with new found love. 📷

(left) All five children of Santa Steele celebrated her 90th birthday on November 17, 2015. This is the first photo ever of all her daughters with their brother, who had recently come into their lives, (l-r) Diana Friedman, George Bradley, Debbie Harris, Donna Garry, and Denise Konca.



(above, l-r) George Bradley meets his mom, Santa Steele on December 2, 2012, for the first time since his birth sixty seven years ago in May of 1947.

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Although great care has been taken to ensure the information contained within is accurate, *Around About Peterstown* assumes no liability for errors or omissions.

*Around About Peterstown* welcomes the comments and concerns of its readers put into writing and sent to:

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**President's Message**



Check out the announcement on page 4 of this newspaper promoting the Baby Boomer Party hosted by the Sons of Peterstown. It will be a repeat of a party we had in 2009.

It was the brainchild of Denis Horin and a few of his close buds. Joe Marino and Tommy Carr stepped up to help organize.

This is not just a party for guys or girls of just one certain age. We want to encourage others to use this opportunity to get their own group of friends together. There is more than enough space in the Peterstown Community Center and there will be more than enough food.

So many people felt bad that they missed the first Baby Boomer Party. So many siblings of those who attended and friends who may not have been in their grade in school but played softball together or hung out in the same crew. So help spread the word. Get your own circle of friends together and have your own mini reunion. Roughly anyone born after WWII and before the British Invasion would feel welcome.

God bless,  
John Sacco, President  
Sons of Peterstown Sports Club

**PRESS RELEASES**

Press Releases that benefit the community of Peterstown are offered free of charge. Every effort will be made to accommodate appropriate articles when time and space allows. Send any info in early.

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908-709-0530



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**Letters to the Editor**



**LETTER POLICY**

*Around About Peterstown* welcomes Letters to the Editor at our postal, fax or e-mail addresses. Letters must include sender's name, address and phone number (only name and town will be printed). Letters should be typed. Letters appear as space permits. We reserve the right not to print a letter without notifying sender.

Dear Editor,

First of all thanks for your great effort in keeping alive the Peterstown culture from which my own big family originates. We love keeping up with all that still endures there through your newspaper. And also, thanks for the huge volume of collected remembrances in the book you assembled on Peterstown. One of my sisters ran off with my copy but I'll get it back.

Second of all thanks for the deeply insightful view of my new memoir, *Wilderness Begins at Home*. It brings tears to my eyes and my family is loving it.

My publisher has arranged a big launch party and I'd like to invite you and all of your readers to attend. There will be food, wine, music and signed books for sale. In addition to *Wilderness*, my late mother's cookbook, *La Cucina di Carmela*, published by her ten children, will be available. The book party is May 2nd, 7 to 8:30 pm at Kean University's Ruth Horowitz Alumni House, 215 North Ave, Hillside, NJ. Look forward to seeing you there!

Molte grazie,  
Camille Cusumano  
San Francisco, CA

Dear Joe Renna, Publisher,

I got a subscription to your newspaper for a cousin of mine who is a native of Elizabeth. She is now living in Manchester, New Jersey. She is confined to a wheel chair and reading about old times and old friends is great recreation for her. She would really enjoy receiving your newspaper.

Sincerely,  
Gloria Pasqualle  
Short Hills, NJ

Dear Joe & Tina Renna

My grandparents, Vincenzo and Carmella Navarro came to America from Ribera, Sicily. They settled in Peterstown on Second Avenue where he raised my father John and his brother Gus. My parents were married in St. Anthony's Church.

I have many memories of Peterstown, Saraceno's, Sutura's, Simone', etc. I celebrated my "Sweet 16" birthday at Spirito's. I will now take my children and grandchildren there for my 64th birthday. Your Peterstown Book helps them to know Peterstown the way I knew it.

Sincerely,  
Carmella (Navarro) Briscese  
East Brunswick, NJ

Joe,

My brother John and I traveled to and from New Jersey down to Jacksonville, Florida to watch John's son TJ play college baseball at the University of North Florida. TJ is a 2014 St. Peter's Prep graduate and was a three-year varsity baseball player. He presently plays for the University of Hartford.

While in Florida we also visited our brother Joe, who resides in Palm Coast. As an added bonus we all got to visit with our longtime friend Anthony Candelino.

Anthony lived in Jacksonville and is co-owner of a Restaurant called River City Brewing Company. He is also head basketball coach at Bolles High School in Jacksonville. On February 25 his team won the Section 4 state championship with a final record of 28-3.

We also spent time visiting Anthony Candelino at his restaurant for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Many stories were shared about the good old days growing up in Elizabeth, Playing sports with and against each other.

We all played high school baseball and in plenty of recreation leagues. My brother Joe played for Elizabeth High School and graduated 1981. John was class of 1979 at Elizabeth High and I graduated St. Patrick High School in 1976. Candelino, a 1985 graduate for Elizabeth High, also played basketball.

I thought the readers of the Peterstown newspaper would like to see one of their favorite sons and hear of his latest success, so I enclosed a photo.

Sincerely,  
Ed Ward  
Elizabeth, NJ

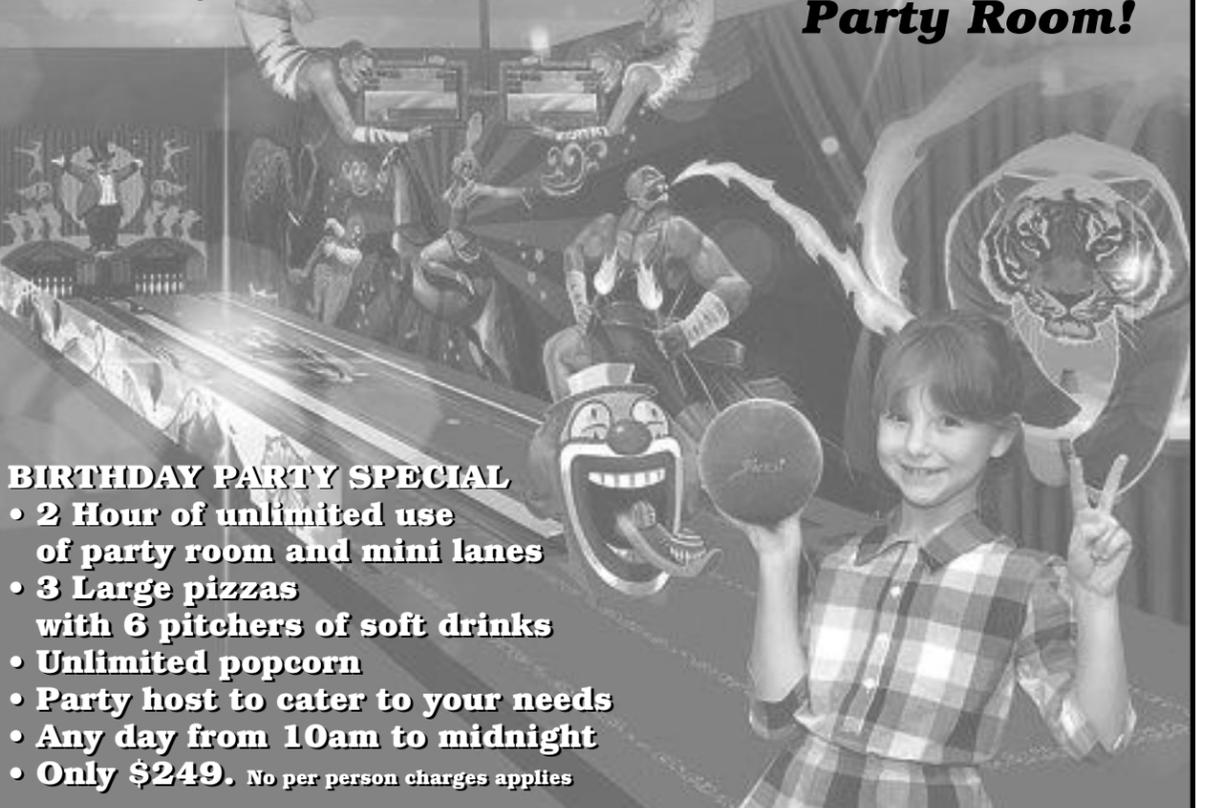


(above, l-r) Joe Ward, Anthony Candelino, Ed Ward, John Ward, and TJ Ward.

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# Editor's Opinion

by Joe Renna

This issue of the Peterstown newspaper has two of the most inspirational stories I have covered since I started publishing it in 1998. The cover story about Santa Steele reuniting with her son sixty-seven years after giving him up for adoption, and Frank Merlo on page twelve, both speak to the sanctity of life and how we are all connected.

As an unwed mother in 1947, Santa gave her baby up for adoption. In her heart she thought it was the right thing to do. Knowing what a loving mother and grandmother she was her entire life, I imagine that it had to be the most difficult decision for her to make. In retrospect she said she "did the right thing" she added that she would have never been able to give her son the quality of life he ended up having.

I can only think about how many lives her son, George, has touched in a positive way, father and grandfather himself. The number of young students he influenced as a teacher, and the positive changes they made to society.

I feel bad for the shame that Santa had endured and curse the stigma associated with women and unplanned pregnancy. How precious was the life of her baby and how beautiful that life turned out to be.

The effect that Frank Merlo had on lives as a medic during World War II is immeasurable. It is impossible to know how many lives he saved and who those young soldiers were who returned from battle to raise families and contribute to the Golden Age of America.

Frank is one the most interesting people from Peterstown in that he was the influential life partner of Tennessee Williams, one of America's greatest playwrights. I think about what stigma Frank had to overcome as a homosexual in the 1940s.

The wonder of how each of our lives are affected by someone, no matter how remotely, is awe inspiring. From Peterstown to Nebraska the ripple effect of Santa's life endlessly spreads. How many lives she touched through her son. I think of the people who have been an influence in my life and who influenced them. How many degrees of separation before all the ripples of influence cross.

I'm inspired to pay forward the kindness that I received. I try to respect everyone equally and help those in need. There is a chance that they indirectly were a help to me. I was blessed being raised in a community like Peterstown where looking out for one another was part of our culture.

We can never really know everything about a person, be it a stranger or your own brother, who may even be one in the same. The thought makes me hopeful for the future. The challenges in life and the ills of society can all be overcome when enough people do right by each other. In mixing metaphors: Do to the least of your brother because there for the grace of God goes I. 🙏



**Not for Nothing But...**

the caterpillar is just  
as responsible for  
the butterfly effect.



## SANTA STEELE PASSES AWAY AT 90

November 17, 1925 - March 11, 2016

On March 7, 2016, Santa Di Dolce Steele passed away at Father Hudson House, Elizabeth, New Jersey, after a brief illness, at the age of 90.

Santa was lucky enough to live a long and relatively healthy life and for that her family is very grateful. They are keenly aware of how fortunate there were to have had her in their lives for so very long.

Santa was born in Peterstown, the youngest child of Sicilian immigrants, Concetta Romano Di Dolce and Giuseppe Di Dolce. She was predeceased by all of her siblings, Salvatore Di Dolce, Carmela Di Dolce Lieb, Maria Di Dolce Tracy, Giovanni Di Dolce, Paolina Di Dolce Sevinsky and Francesco Di Dolce. She remained a resident of Peterstown for most of her life where she raised her daughters, Diana Friedman, Debbie Harris, Donna Garry and Denise Konca.

Santa was a fixture on Third Avenue, having lived at 807 Third Avenue for over 37 years. Most Burg residents knew that she lived upstairs from the late Sarah and Jimmy Malta, where on the same block lived the Manetta's, the Zampella's, the Navarro's and the Ciliberto's, to name a few. Among others, across the street were the Sacco's, the Giuliano's, the Esposito's – not to mention Saraceno's Bakery and, of course, Sacco's Meat Market.

Like many of the women of Peterstown, Santa found employment with Manheim Manufacturing on Spring Street, where she remained for over 21 years until the place suddenly closed its doors one Friday afternoon and those women all found themselves out of a job.

It was a few years after that time that Santa moved to Roselle Park, where she resided for over 26 years with her daughter and son-in-law, Debbie and Rusty Harris, and their three children. During the time that she lived in Roselle Park, Santa made it back to Peterstown to the Retired Men's and Women's Club meeting whenever she could.

At age 87, Santa was blessed to be reunited with her son, George Louis Bradley, who she was forced to give up for adoption shortly after his birth. In 2012, George and his family began the search for his biological mother and were beyond ecstatic to find her alive and well. Soon after, the entire Bradley family traveled from Nebraska and California for the mother and child reunion. To say it was joyous would be an understatement, and Santa's family will be forever grateful that she was given the blessing of meeting and getting to know her only son.

Santa also was predeceased by her sons-in-law, Douglas Friedman and Russell (Rusty) Harris. She is survived by her son, George and his wife, Sherry; daughters, Diana Friedman, Deborah Harris, Donna Garry and her partner, Donald Depczynski, and Denise Konca and husband, Andrew. She is also survived by 11 grandchildren, 10 great-grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews. 🙏

Thanks to Debbie Harris for sharing her mom's story and writing a beautiful narrative used for the cover story and obituary above.

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# PETERSTOWN HISTORY TALK HOSTED BY THE UNION TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY

On March 20, 2016, the Union Township Historical Society hosted a presentation given by Joe and Tina Renna about The Peterstown Book. The event was well attended and a lively discussion was had about the history of the neighborhood. The event took place at the historic Connecticut Farms Presbyterian Church, on

Stuyvesant Avenue in Union. Quite a few attendees had roots in Elizabeth and Peterstown and had many of their own stories to share.

Joe and Tina Renna are available to speak if any organization is interested in hosting a presentation. Call Joe at 908-447-1295.

## ADVERTISERS' INDEX

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Advertising starts at \$60 for a business card size ad, up to \$600 for a full page. Anyone interested in placing an ad can contact Tina Renna at (908) 418-5586.

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(above, l-r) Joe and Tina Renna with members of the Union Township Historical Society, Anita Centeno, Marie Canarelli, Joseph Canarelli, Barbara LaMort, Dennis LaMort, and Michael Yesenko.

## IT'S ON!!! BE THERE OR BE SQUARE



**Sons of Peterstown**  
is hosting a

# BABY BOOMER PARTY

For all those Peterstown folks born post WWII but not thier kids

## Saturday, June 25, 2016

5:00 pm til 10:00pm

### Peterstown Community Center

Palmer Street and Fourth Avenue, Elizabeth, NJ

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R.S.V.P. by June 15th.

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Baby Boomer Party event page

Contact Dennis Horin  
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email: jogimarino@aol.com  
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# MAKING CONNECTIONS AT UNION BOOK SIGNING

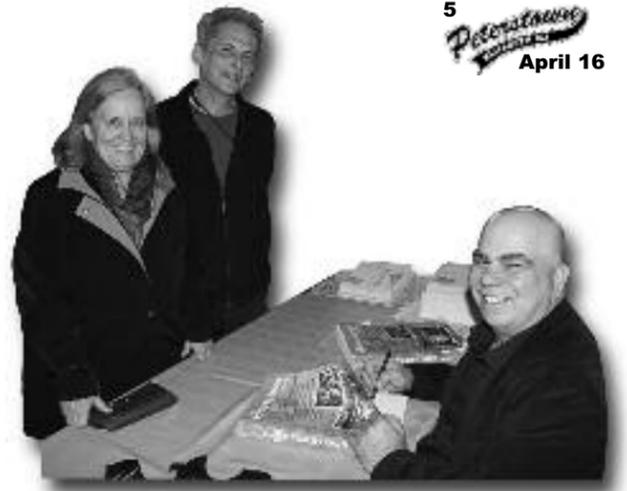
Barbara Girgus attended the presentation of The Peterstown Book hosted by The Union Township Historical Society in March 2016. She was there with her father, Michael, who is now 94 years old.

Michael Girgus grew up in the Port section of Elizabeth and he had fond memories of friends who were from the Peterstown neighborhood. He played second base for the Mattano Club softball team, a social club located at 466 Third Avenue in Peterstown. He played

for three years until he left to serve his county in the Pacific during World War II.

After getting married in 1951 he moved to Christine Street in Peterstown, and lived there for 10 years before moving to Clark, NJ.

Mike said that he never had pizza pie until he played for Mattanos but once he tried it he was hooked. When he moved to Christine Street he regularly went to Spiritos. 🍕



(above, l-r) Lorraine and Phillip Bartone get their copy of The Peterstown Book signed by Joe Renna an event hosted by the Union Township Historical Society.



(above) Barbara Girgus supplied a photo of the 1940 Mattano's softball team for publication in hopes that readers of the Peterstown newspaper can identify some players. Her father, Michael Girgus, in the front row, kneeling at the far right. He believes that is the year that they won the league championship. The only name he can recall is teammate George Glias, standing in the back row, in uniform, to the far left.

## PHOTOS ALBUMS OF PETERSTOWN EVENTS

*Photos of Peterstown events like the Baby Boomer Party form 2009*

*can be found online at [www.renamedia.com](http://www.renamedia.com)*

*and on the PeterstownNJ Facebook page.*

*Feel free to Like, Tag and Share.*

## PETERSTOWN BOOK SPECIAL OFFER FOR BABY BOOMER PARTYGOERS

Anyone attending the Peterstown Baby Boomer Party on Saturday, June 25, 2016 will have the opportunity to purchase The Peterstown Book for half price, that is \$25 including sales tax. 🍕

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By Joe & Tina Renna

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## KAREN THANKS CUSTOMERS FOR 25 YEARS OF LOYALTY TO DIMENSIONS HAIR SALON

Karen Kotas, nee Iazzetta, is modest when speaking about her success. She owns and operates Dimensions Hair Salon in Avenel, New Jersey and is celebrating her twenty-fifth year in business. She gives all the credit for her success to her loyal customers and thanks them for her accomplishments. Some may argue that the opposite is more accurate, that her customers are loyal because she is so accomplished.

(left, l-r) Dimension's Hair Salon staff, Denise (Steele) Konca, Cindy (Iazzetta) Kowalczyk, and Michele Joseph stand behind owner Karen (Iazzetta) Kotas.

Karen started styling hair while she was still in high school. She grew up on John Street in the Peterstown section of Elizabeth and attended Edison Technical High School and started to learn the craft. At fifteen years old she started to work at Salon Coiffures by Arthur, a neighborhood salon owned by Arthur DeMaio who went into the business himself just a year earlier in 1973.

She became a full-fledged stylist at Arthur's in 1983. In 1985 Arthur moved the business to Avenel and Karen joined him there. In 1990 Karen purchased the salon from Arthur. She moved it a few doors away to 1256 St. Georges Avenue and has been servicing customers there ever since.

Karen's customers reflect her way of business. They are folks who value personal service, who want a stylist who they can trust and feel comfortable with. Karen's customers are loyal because she is loyal. A trait that the other stylists at her salon also share. Denise Konca, nee Steele, Michele Joseph, and Karen's sister Cindy Kowalczyk have all been with her since the beginning in 1985. Denise, like Arthur, was also a neighbor of Karen's in Peterstown.

A testimony to the loyalty of her customers is reflected in the number of customers she has from Peterstown. Harriet LaPolla is the oldest and longest customer. Others like Josephine and Bella Piga have been going to Karen since her days in Elizabeth.

Dimensions is full-service salon catering to men and women, keeping up with the latest techniques and trends including Obmre, a hair coloring trend that is all the rage.

Dimensions is located at 1256 St. Georges Avenue, Avenel, NJ. Appointments can be scheduled by calling 732-636-6677.



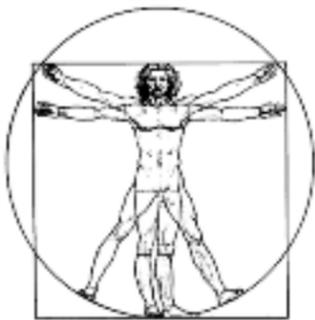
(above) Scene from Coiffures by Arthur circa 1985. (standing, l-r) Arthur DeMaio, Harriet LaPolla, Margret DeMario, and Denise Steele. (seated) Libby Giordano. Harriet, now 84, still gets her hair done by Karen.

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## THE ST. ANTHONY'S FAMILY FEAST - JUNE 9 TO 12, 2016 CHURCH OF THE ASSUMPTION, ROSELLE PARK, NJ

Once again it will be four days of faith, fun, family and friends, packed full of delicious homemade cooking, an Italian style Café, food vendors, a beer & wine garden, non-stop entertainment and music (your favorite performers are returning!), amusements, and games. The events, located on the Church grounds at 113 Chiego Place, Roselle Park, will begin on Thursday, June 9 and run through Sunday, June 12. Hours: Thurs 6-11PM, Fri 6-11PM, Sat 6-11PM, Sun 2-10PM.

These four days will be packed full of fun for everyone. Returning entertainment will be Thurs 6/9 from 8-10pm Nikki Briar and the Sweet Briar Band, Fri. 6/10 from 8-10pm The Baron-Montemurro Duo, Sat 6/11 from 8-10pm The Jersey Four (Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons Tribute), Sun 6/12 from 7-9pm Dave DeLuca (Rat Pack Flashback). Also on Fri 6/10 from 6:00 – 6:30pm there will, once again, be a poetry program presented by Leona M Seufert. NJ 101.5 Big Yellow Prize Van will return on Sat. 6/11 from 6-8pm

The Feast is also a faith oriented celebration. On Sun 6/12 the Noon Mass will have Pastor, Rev. James Spera as celebrant. Immediately following the Mass there will be a traditional procession through the streets with the statue of St. Anthony accompanied with music by the Metropolitan Festival Band. Once again, the beautiful 100 year old statue of St. Anthony, that was part of the parish when founded in 1907, will be the center piece of the procession led by the Knights of Columbus 4th Degree Color Corps.

Each night will have 50/50 drawings, and a SUPER 50/50 will be on Sun 6/12 at 9:00pm (tickets are \$10)!

If rain arrives the entertainment for that day in the parish's spacious Msgr. Loreti Hall.

For dates and times of all entertainment and to be updated on the latest developments visit [assumptionrp.com](http://assumptionrp.com). Also visit Assumption's Facebook page. "Like" the St. Anthony's Feast. Contact rectory at 908-245-1107.

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# DEPAOLA FAMILY TREE PLANTED IN 1913

Written By: Cathy DePaola Sulzberg

The recent passing of my Uncle Rocco DePaola, on February 13, 2016, a World War II veteran and attorney who practiced law for 35 years in Elizabeth, whom also served as counsel for the Vallatese Club has offered up many shared memories of the legendary Peterstown.

As with the passing of any loved one, friends and family always reminisce and share memories. As the youngest of the seventeen grandchildren of Silvano and Nicoletta DePaola, from whom the roots of this family tree were planted, I always enjoy hearing these recollections which prompted me to share our story.

The DePaola Family's seventy plus year history in the Peterstown section of Elizabeth began in 1913 when Patriarch, Silvano DePaola, immigrated to America from Vallata, Italy at the age of 22. Silvano settled in Peterstown where he met his wife, Nicoletta Magaletta and they married in 1919. Shortly after, Silvano and Nicoletta started their family of three girls Carmella, Annmarie and Lucille and four boys, Rocco, Anthony, Salvatore and Vito, all of which served in the military.

Silvano and Nicoletta raised their seven children in a

small house at 409 Nile Street. Silvano passed away in 1955. Nicoletta resided in this house until her time of death in 1980. Thereafter, the DePaola family kept this residence in the family for a total of seventy years.

The eldest, Carmella born September 10, 1922, married Robert Farley and had a son, Robert Farley, Jr. and resided in Elizabeth until her time of death on May 8, 2005.

Annmarie, born May 13, 1925, married Vito Terranova and had six children, John, Peter, Vito, Annmarie, Sally Ann and Patricia; she also resided in Elizabeth until her time of death on September 22, 1997.

Rocco, born November 22, 1926, served in the US Navy during World War II from 1943 to 1947, he then attended and graduated Rutgers Law School in Newark. After passing the Bar he practiced law in Elizabeth for 35 years and also served as counsel for the Vallatese Club. Rocco married Joanne Damiano and remained married for over thirty years until the recent time of his death on February 13, 2016.

Anthony, born February 1, 1929, served in the US



(left) Photo of Rocco DePaola who passed away on February 13, 2016 at the age of 89, taken on his wedding day in 1981.

Army from 1943-1947. Anthony married Carmella and had two children, Deborah and Gregory. He was employed at Budweiser and could also be seen working at the fruit stand at the Elizabeth First Ave Market. Anthony resided in Elizabeth until the time of his death on November 9, 1994.

Salvatore, born October 15, 1930, served in the US Army from 1950-1952. Salvatore married Grace and had three daughters, Linda, Karen and Annette. He worked at the US Postal service and lived in Roselle Park until the time of his death on February 1, 2009.

Vito, born October 8, 1932, served in the US Army during the Korean War from 1953-1955. Vito married Bernadine and had two children, Mark and Cathy. He worked at the US Postal service, he is now retired and living in Colonia.

Lucille was born August 6, 1935. She was married to Roy Deloy and had three children, Douglas, Cheryl and Frank. She is retired and currently resides in San Francisco.

Over 70 years of roots in Peterstown's tightknit community offers up many shared memories of feasts, First Avenue Market and family gatherings.



(above, l-r) Rocco, Lucielle, Salvatore, Bernadine, Vito, Nicoleta, Carmela, Anthony and AnnMarie.



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The Village Insurance owners make sure they support the other local businesses. "Shopping Small" and keeping business in town helps other business owners like themselves. Supporting local community service organizations is also a key component to Aldo and Mike's generosity.

Helping the youth of the community was a special focus for the two partners. They supported youth baseball, basketball, softball, and boy and girl scouts. They also helped with Project Graduation. As an active UNICO member, Aldo is also involved in the club's annual Feast.

Aldo combines his love of soccer with his volunteerism. The year after he moved to Clark, Aldo began coaching youth soccer, serving as the president of the Soccer

League. He was able to coach a generation of young players, including his own two sons and daughter. His office is peppered with photos of teams he coached and others that were sponsored by Village Insurance.

Aldo coached until 2010, and has fond memories of the years that he coached. He saw so many of his players mature into young men and women, some even going on to college soccer careers.

Village Insurance is a fine example of how a business could be a good neighbor. Local businesses supporting each other and helping the community is a formula for success, for the business and the community.



(above) Photo of the first team Aldo Tripicchio (far right) coached in 1987. His son Gianfranco, age 6, is standing third from the left.



(above) Players from his 2003 team went on to be 2011 sectional champs their senior year in high school, first time in school history.

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# CRAZY ABOUT SOCCER

Aldo Tripicchio has been involved with a fan club rooting for Inter Milan, a professional Italian football club based in Milan, Italy. The group, Interclub Facchatti New Jersey, has about 110 members and follows the Series A league team. As the joy of soccer brings the members together they are able to put the group to good use by raising funds for good causes like the Special Olympics and Juvenile Diabetes Foundation.

Inter Milan and Interclub both support Inter Campus, an international organization that helps thousands of needy children around the world, using the values of sport and the game of soccer as an educational tool.

Inter Campus contributes to the development of the local communities, supporting educational, social and sanitary protection programs carried out by local partners. Moreover, Inter Campus promotes social integration among differing ethnic groups and cultures. Aldo travels with the team on fundraising tours. Information about the organization can be found online at [www.interclubnj.com](http://www.interclubnj.com).



(above) The Tripicchio family, Gloria, Anthony, Kristen, Gianfranco, and Aldo celebrating Kristen's graduation from Notre Dame in 2015.

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**STEP 3 PICK YOUR CHEESE:**

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Asiago	Blue Cheese Crumble
	Feta

**STEP 4 PICK YOUR MEATS:**

Applewood Bacon	Italian Sausage	Canadian Bacon
Crumbled Meatballs	Pepperoni	Thin Sliced Rib-Eye
Grilled Chicken		

**STEP 5 PICK YOUR VEGGIES:**

Bell Peppers	Fresh Tomatoes	Pineapple
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(right)  
Carmela Cusumano  
July 31, 1922  
November 19, 2015

## ALL ARE INVITED TO BOOK(S) SIGNING AT KEAN UNIVERSITY MONDAY MAY 2, 2016

When Camille Cusumano's mother, Carmela, died in November 2015, she was just finishing up her memoir, *Wilderness Begins at Home*, *Travels With My Big Sicilian Family*. Since the loss of her mother, Camille, together with her nine siblings published a cook book her mother authored.

Camille will be celebrating the launch of both books at Kean University on May 2, 2016. Camille is extending an invite to celebrate with food, wine, music and conversation.

**Monday, May 2nd, 7 to 8:30 p.m.**

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[camillecusumano.com/uncategorized/new-books-launch-parties](http://camillecusumano.com/uncategorized/new-books-launch-parties)



(above, left)  
Camille Cusumano

All seventeen of Camille Cusumano's books can be found on [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) including her latest book "*Wilderness Begins at Home*", and Her mother's book "*La Cucina di Carmela*".



## LA CUCINA DI CARMELA

Carmela Cusumano passed away on November 19, 2015 at the age of 93. Her legacy includes ten children, twenty-five grandchildren and thirty-five great-grandchildren. Her biography can now include published author. Her children published a cook book that Carmela wrote posthumously.

The cook book was a labor of love, a gift from

Carmela to her descendants. The book titled "*La Cucina di Carmela, A Sicilian American Cookbook*" features remembrances of their mother by each of her children. Backstories about the recipes appear throughout the book along with family photos.

The book was a labor of love, for mother and children.

## Recipes

From Carmela Cusumano's book, *La Cucina di Carmela*

The recipes in Carmela Cusumano's book, "*La Cucina di Carmela*", reflect her Sicilian heritage and the time and place (New Jersey) where she raised her family. Thus the recipes weave Carmela's simple fare that she had to stretch to feed her large family with her passion later in life for collecting new recipes from everyone, from her Hungarian sister-in-law to a Texas chef.

You will find recipes for homemade pasta, sausage, and eggplant appetizer, for Hungarian cakes and cookies, and that Texan chef's crab claw appetizer. There are recipes for classics, like Wedding Soup and Sicilian cannoli and pizza and Carmela's treasured discoveries like strawberry cream cake and pineapple pie.

### Veal Piccata

#### INGREDIENTS

- |                               |                             |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 Pound Veal Cutlets          | 1/2 Pound Mushrooms, Sliced |
| Flour for Browning            | 1/2 Cup White Wine          |
| 3 Tablespoons Olive Oil       | Dashes Worcestershire Sauce |
| 1/4 Cup Butter                | Dashes Soy Sauce            |
| 1 or 2 Cloves Garlic, Minced, | Thin Slices of Lemon        |
| or 1/2 Tsp Granules           | Chopped Parsley             |

#### PREPARATION

- 1) Dredge veal in flour.
- 2) Pour oil in pan and brown veal quickly on both sides. Set aside on warm platter.
- 3) In the same fry pan add butter, garlic and saute for a few seconds, add mushrooms and stir for a few minutes.
- 4) Add wine, Worcestershire sauce, and soy sauce.
- 5) Add some thin slices of lemon and parsley. Sprinkle a little flour to thicken if needed.
- 4) Add veal just to heat; and serve.

Yield: 4 to 6 Servings

### Stuffed Eggplant with Tomato Sauce

#### INGREDIENTS

- 1 Large Eggplant
- 1 Pound Ricotta Cheese
- 1/3 Cup Grated Parmesan
- 1 Egg
- 1 Teaspoon Parsley
- 1 Teaspoon Salt
- 1/2 Teaspoon Black Pepper

#### SAUCE

- Olive Oil
- 1 Small Onion
- 1 or 2 Cloves Garlic
- 1 Can Crushed Tomatoes
- 1 Tablespoon Sugar
- 1 Tablespoon Fennel, ground (optional)
- Salt and Pepper, to taste

#### PREPARATION

- 1) Peel eggplant, slice and salt lightly and layer in colander for about 30 minutes. Rinse and pat dry on paper toweling.
- 2) Fry, broil, or grill the eggplant. Whichever way you choose, first brush the eggplant slices on both sides with some olive oil, using a pastry brush. When brown or soft, remove eggplant and put aside. Eggplant does not have to be thoroughly cooked, as it will cook more when you bake it with the stuffing and sauce.

#### SAUCE

- 1) Pour a little olive oil in a sauce pot. Saute onion and garlic, be sure not to let burn.
- 2) Add tomatoes and seasoning and cook slowly for about 30 to 40 minutes.

#### STUFFING

- 1) Mix the ricotta, grated cheese, egg, parsley, and salt and pepper.

#### ASSEMBLE

- 1) In a baking pan layer sauce, then eggplant, then ricotta mixture. Continue on till all ingredients are used.
- 2) Cover and bake for 40 minutes at 350 degrees. Serve with crusty Italian bread.

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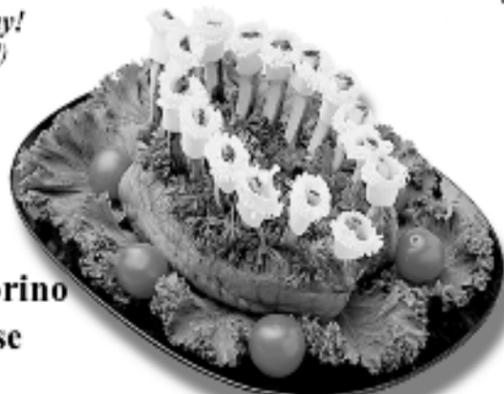
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Founded in 1989, Cento Amici (originally known as Trenta Amici) first supported a range of charitable organizations. As membership grew over the years, the group narrowed its focus to the support of education, where our members believe they can have a significant impact.

As a recognized non-profit organization, Cento Amici currently supports scholarships at Montclair State University, St. Anthony High School, St. Peter's Prep, Rutgers New Jersey Medical School, and Union County College.

Cento Amici has also made special contributions Roselle Catholic High School, Raritan Valley Community College, to a scholarship fund established for the children of police officers and firefighters killed on 9/11, and to the Delbarton School for the establishment of an inner-city scholarship fund.



(above, l-r) Cento Amici President Robert T. Zito with special guest Joe Piscopo who performed on drums.

On April 4, 2016 Cento Amici held their 28th Annual Spring Scholarship Recipient Dinner at Alfie's Ristorante in Warren, NJ. Morning radio host and former Saturday Night Live star Joe Piscopo and CNN Chief Business Correspondent and author Christine Romans welcomed the 2015-16 scholarship recipients.

Cento Amici stages two fund-raising events each year – a golf outing in the spring, and an annual dinner in the fall. Please see the Golf Classic and Events areas of their web site, [centoamici.org](http://centoamici.org), for additional details.

Anyone interested in donating funds to scholarships can Georgeanna Walker at [georgeanna@centoamici.org](mailto:georgeanna@centoamici.org). For questions pertaining to membership contact [membership@centoamici.org](mailto:membership@centoamici.org).



*Photos of this and other events can be found on [www.renamedia.com](http://www.renamedia.com) and on the PeterstownNJ Facebook page.*



(above, l-r) Peterstown's own James Sammartino and Joe Venturini are dwarfed by Heavyweight contender Chuck Wepner.



(above, l-r) Chef Franco of Alfie's Ristorante with guest speaker Christine Romans

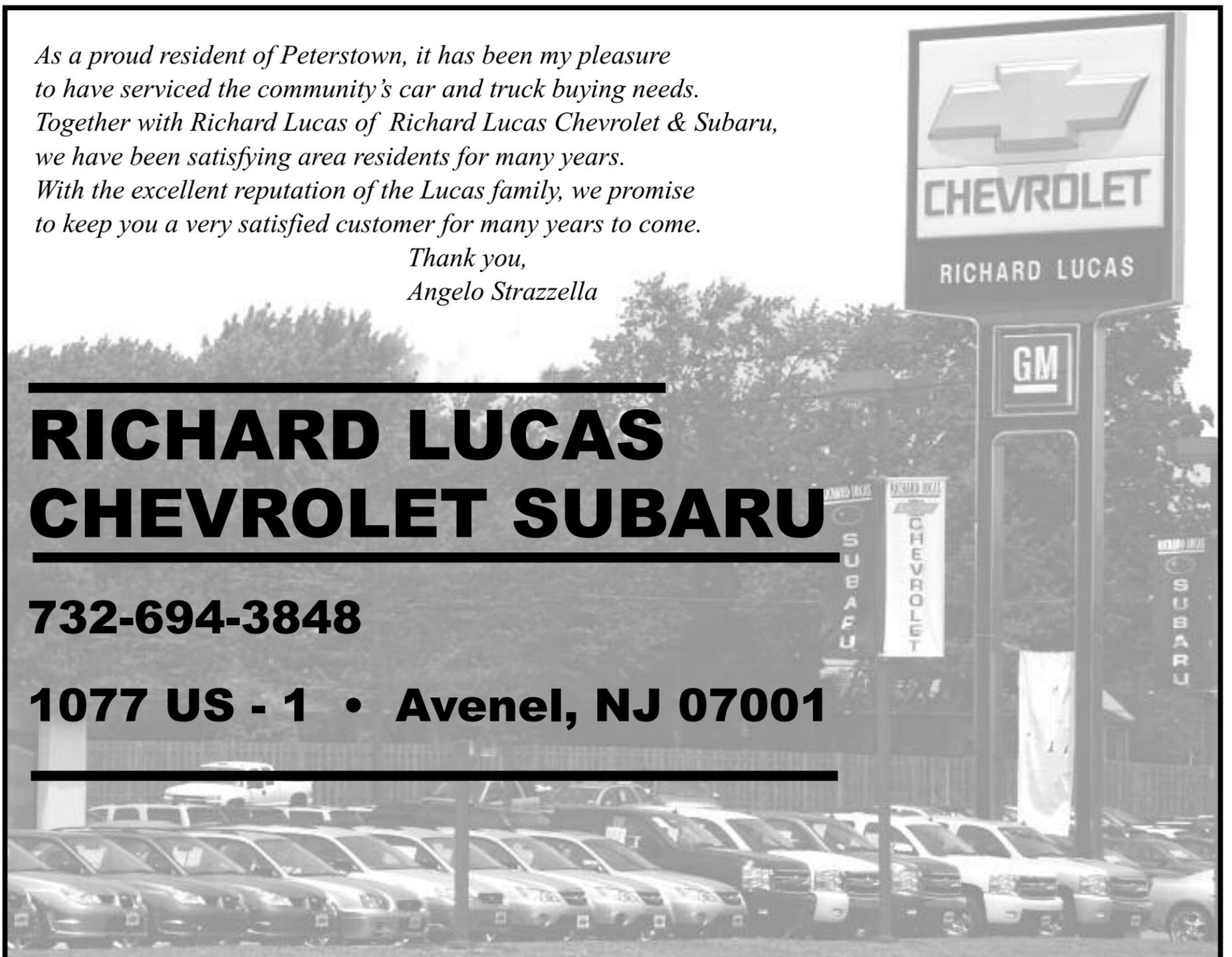
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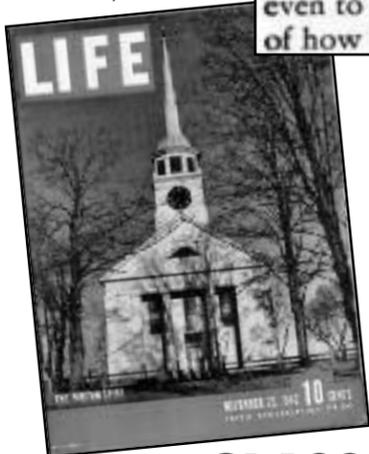


(above, l-r) Frank Gionataiso and Frank Merlo and on leave from boot camp in 1941.



(left, l-r) Frank Traina, Frank Gionataiso, Frank Merlo, and Sammy Ruvalo.

(right) Life magazine reported on the battle that Frank Merlo wrote about in his letter to Gionataiso. The article spanned 11 pages in the November 23, 1942



**T**he Third Battle of the Matanikau River on Guadalcanal was a laboratory sample of the thousands of skirmishes our men are going to have to fight before the war is won. In terms of Stalingrad or Changsha or El Alamein, it was not a great clash. It flatters the action a little even to call it a battle. But it affords an example of how battle feels to men everywhere.

Few Americans have ever heard of the Matanikau River, to say nothing of its Third Battle. The river is a light brown stream winding through a jungle valley about five miles west of Henderson Field. When I arrived on Guadalcanal, our forces did not hold positions out to the Matanikau. The Japs were moving up in some strength, evidently to try to establish their bridgehead—the first in their series of heavy moves against our camp. It became imperative for our troops to push to the river and force the enemy back beyond it, before it was too late. The first two battles of the Matanikau River had been earlier attempts to do just that. In the first one, the Marines tried to do the job frontally; but their force was too small. In the second,

typical Marine engagement in the mud and jungle of Guadalcanal

by JOHN HERSEY



John Hersey has just returned from the Solomons, where he served as correspondent for Time and LIFE. This picture was taken behind the lines Oct. 9 just after he returned from the action described here. Over his helmet he is wearing a net removed from a Jap sniper.

they tried a tactic of encirclement, but again not enough men were thrown into action. This third time, with the enemy constantly growing in strength, there could be no question of failing. . . . "Awright! Reveille! It's 6 o'clock. Come on, fellas, all out. Reveille!" Although it was 6 o'clock and just barely light, it did not take much persuasion to start the men in Col. Amor Leroy Sims's camp stirring, wandering out to brush their teeth, shave, start cramming things into their packs, polish their already polished rifles.

Word was passed up through the encampment: "Mass at 6:30 for those who want it. Six-thirty mass." Attendance was pretty good that morning. While that religious rite was being carried out, there was also a pagan touch. Four buzzards flew over the camp. "To the right hand," said a young Marine, like a Roman sage; "Our fortunes will be good."

One of the last orders we had heard Col. Sims give the evening before was to the officer of the mess: "Breakfast in the morning must be a good, solid, hot meal. And if we get back from starving ourselves for two or three days out there and find that you fellows who stay behind have been gourmandizing, some one'll be shot at dawn."

Breakfast was solid, all right—our last square meal for three days. On the table there were huge pans full of sliced pineapples, beans, creamed chipped beef, a rice-and-raisin stew, crackers, canned butter, jam, and coffee.

As the units began lining up to move out, the first artillery barrage broke out—75's and 105's coughing deeply, and then a minute later the an-

## FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS

Firsthand accounts of World War II are much more intense than journalistic reports. Readers can put themselves in the place of the author and the effect can be chilling. Knowing the author makes the experience even more intense. Verbal discussions with veterans steps the intensity up a notch.

Frank Gionataiso and his friends regularly share stories of their wartime experiences with locals who frequent Sacco's Butcher Shop in the Peterstown section of Elizabeth, NJ for breakfast or lunch. One account of the war that Frank shared came in the form of a letter he received from a Peterstown friend who was in the jungles of Guadalcanal in 1942.

Gionataiso, who was in Albany at the time, corresponded with his buddy Frank Merlo. Frank served as a medic and was in the thick of the battle of the Matanikau River. He wrote about his experience in a letter to Frank who would like to share it through the Peterstown newspaper.

The letter starts off a bit light talking about a particularly shapely nurse and a shipment with his clothes being delayed and not having duds to wear for a weekend leave.

The letter turned serious in an instant when Frank started to talk about a battle that he just participated in. The action that he described was horrific yet his writing did not reflect the extreme emotions that he was feeling. His letter seemed almost calm, even when he wrote about how close he was to being killed. He wrote in a steady tone about treating the wounded and at one point burying the dead. He wrote about extreme fatigue, and lack of water all the while dutifully doing his job as a hospital corpsman.

There is a sadness to the two Merlo letters in reading about the soldiers who were killed. They are not

statistics but someone's son, brother, father, husband and uncle. That person could have easily been related to anyone reading the letter. In the same vein, Frank Merlo saved the life of someone who was a son, brother, father, husband and uncle.

Frank's letter showed a glimpse of one small skirmish in four years of fighting. Sixteen million Americans served in the effort. Each with their individual experiences yet all were connected in some way. They may have been childhood friends who enlisted together or they may have met by chance in a fox hole.

The idea that no man is an island was expressed in a poem by John Donne. Hemingway used the last line of that poem to title his book "For Whom The Bell Tolls." The actions of these soldiers resonates in the generations that follow, those who saved lives, those whose lives were saved, and those who lost their lives. Frank Merlo was responsible for the lives of countless children, grandchildren, great and great-great grandchildren of those lives he saved. As for those who paid the ultimate sacrifice, the answer to the query is "It tolls for thee."



**Not for Nothing But...**

it's difficult enough just reading what these men experienced.



## THE BATTLE OF THE RIVER

## CLASS IS IN SESSION AT THE SCHOOL OF HARD KNOCKS



(above, l-r) Professors Charlie Olivieri, Vito Bellino, Pete Renna, and Frank Gionataiso.

I've been spending time with my father and his friends lately. We have been meeting at Sacco's Meat Market for breakfast and stay a few hours shooting the breeze. The experience is rewarding on so many levels, thier stories are fascinating.

The get togethers started when one of the crew had a car accident. He joined the growing number of friends who lost thier means to drive, by accident or by mandate. For most seniors this was like being sentenced to home confinement. Immobility is a scourge for senior citizens. I started picking a few guys up, including my dad, once a week and meeting a few others at Sacco's. It's the highlight of the week for the eight life long friends, all between the ages of 88 to 93.

The education that I get is beyond what could be learned in the class room. They pass along thier street smarts, lessons in being a stand up guy. Thier message is not direct but in the form of story telling, anecdotes about life during the depression, World War II, growing

up in poverty and rising out of it. Author Tom Brokow correctly pegged them as The Greatest Generation.

Their memories are intact and whits are sharp, and they talk about history from a personal perspective, all delivered with humor, risque and unfiltered. It is impossible to record all the information or to transcribe the nuances in their words and gestures. The most intriguing stories are those about the war.



**Not for Nothing But...**

I have a whole different meaning for pop quiz.



# LETTER FROM FRANK MERLO FROM THE BATTLE FIELDS OF GUADALCANAL

Dear Frank I  
 I am writing you while waiting for the "old man" to come through the ward for the regular Saturday morning inspection. Your letter has just arrived and was brought to me by the nurse on this ward, who, incidentally, is very pretty, although her legs could stand a bit of remodeling. We can't see too thick. She has her good points, however and do they stick out. I'm beginning to get myself from so much staring. At her good points, I mean!

To date I have made just one living in France. I had to borrow the clothes as mine have not yet arrived. Here I have the whole week and before me and utterly at a loss as to how I shall get some studs to go.

You expressed the hope that you may be relieved of your present duties and that you hope we can get duty together again. I agree most whole heartily on the latter but most emphatically disagree on the former. You are doing as much as anyone can hope to do and if the Navy didn't think your job so "billful", you would "at the time, believe me!"

I think that for the present I am out of the Marine Corps. Of course when I go back receiving ship from here I may be sent back in. I don't know. I hope not! Amper Fiddle's may be fine for those who want it, but just let me be content with Archon's. My only regret is that I leaving and maybe the recognition the Councilman friends I have made. I don't mean get to know a whole battalion of men, including officers, of whom, I may add, I've made some "battering" friends.

Yesterday I spent writing to some of the families of boys that are still on Guadalcanal and those who, though not actually there in body, may be in spirit, urging their comrades on. One of the mothers I wrote to, was a Sgt in whose company I was attached for duty. We were out on a three day battle (which in life Magazine was described pretty well in the Nov 20th issue) and on the last day out, he was shot. I was near him at the time and was rather indisposed owing to a Japanese machine gun spitting at us. Not wanting to get wet, most of us were hugging the earth. I mean, hugging!!! I was laying flat on my stomach and was terribly conscious of 60 rounds of .30 Cal ammunition that I had in my pack.

I also had about 150 hand grenades tucked away in various parts of my pack. I had just witnessed a Jap 20 cal bullet tearing through the pack of a boy ahead of me and was sure the Japs could spot my pack. So me it seemed as if the good-blessed thing sticks at least a mile in the air. So complicated matters, I also had to take a shot and alas, a bad one. I was debating whether to lay them and walk on in my own shoes or make a dash for the seat of the flat. I made a dash and dove (actually) over the seat and squealed. About fifteen yards to my right, was another Marine, also shouting. I had just turned around to ask him if he had some paper, when I heard a loud explosion and been seen roll around, his hands on both ears, screaming. My ears were ringing from the concussion, but I can't see him. His name was Schuber and with some difficulty, managed to tag him and had him removed to a doctor. (This was hard because all the territory was practically hell and well and steep hills at that!)

I had to get back up with my outfit as they were moving forward, although slowly, and were trying to wipe out some machine gun emplacements. I crept forward slowly and after about twenty minutes reached my former position. I had expected to find my outfit further up, but they had not moved because of this one Jap sniper, who was shooting at us.

I have rather wandered in my story relating to the Sgt. mentioned earlier. It was at this spot he was hit. He had a pair of binoculars and had to raise to his knees in order to scan the distant horizon. Although it is hard to see the sons of bitches, because they are as well "camouflaged" (like designed to say) he spotted him and taking a bead with his rifle to his shoulder, was about to hit him when he toppled over as if someone was pushing him and sent the rifle. (Here is where the work of the Hospital Company came into play. I was too far away to give aid, but I saw a PhMx, Chandler, a very good friend of mine, run to him, kneel over him and when he reached him, dragged him to safety. Bullets were spitting all around him and to me it seemed so long before he got over the crest.

Sgt Lewis was mortally wounded. The bullet entered his left shoulder and came out of his right, below the scapula. He lived for most of the day and later on when we were

removing our troops to the beach, I was left behind with a platoon of men to carry back as many wounded as possible. Most of them were able to walk with the help of each other. I got off a few machine guns and was left behind with Sgt Lewis. I ordered three other men to carry it and left four behind to act as ~~spotters~~ alternates. The path was very narrow, weighed at least a 150 lbs. I was very, very hot, we had no water, even for him, it was steep climbing and although I am young, at one point we were standing on a ledge, and although we should have known better, were shy. I was exhausted and decided to give the four down the ~~steeper~~ steeper and I missed the other four to man it. I stepped ahead and just at that moment the air was splintered with the sharp reports of Jap machine gun fire. The bullets were kicking up the coral rock around us. I crouched down below the ledge and looked around. The four men I had just ordered to man the machine gun had stopped their burden. Three of them were hit, two fatally, and the other mortally hit. I crawled up, seized up the situation and began to administer aid to the one who was still alive. Sgt Lewis was

not hit and was trying these orders to all that was going on about him.

The one that was hit was saying "Oh my God! I'm dying!" He was hit in about the only conceivable place of his body. He begged me to shoot and try to bring the Sgt back, so he knew he was going to die. I gave him some Morphine and he died a short while after.

We were half way back to the beach, when I called for a rest. We had to man the machine gun again, as we were the only ones left, besides the two machine gunners. I was so exhausted from climbing, that my nose began to bleed. The others were saying about panting and beautiful that we had to carry back the Sgt. who, it was obvious, was dying. I went to take a look at him and found he was dead.

We decided to bury him and with still helmets and trench shovels dug a grave about two feet deep. I saw a Catholic and had a prayer book and some rosary on him. I read the prayer book and I knelt and to the best of my ability gave him a Christian burial. We marked the grave with a cross made of two logs.

Meanwhile one of the boys on the guns who were working us, ran back and told me to hurry up as it was getting late and he didn't want to get caught in this place at night.

We reached the beach and then they had bigger boats to evacuate the wounded to our nearest area. It was after this battle that I was removed to the hospital.

We only had fifty dead and we estimated a hell of a lot more Japs killed. You can never tell how many of the Okinawans you get, because they drag them with them when ever possible, so you can't count their damages.

I hope to get a thirty-day leave as soon as my treatment is over. I've had lunch prostate massages this past week and the feet were 50% gone although yesterday it was down to 25%. I'll let you know if I'm coming.

Write soon as you can and tell me if you can. I'll remain

Your command pal  
 Frank Merlo  
 U.S. Naval Hospital  
 Guadalcanal, Sol

(above) Letter sent from Frank "Fishy" Merlo PhM 3/C (Pharmacists Mate 3rd Class) U.S. Naval Hospital, Oakland, California to Frank Gionataiso PhM 3/C U.S. Navy Recruiting Station, Albany NY in November, 1942.

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(above) Anna Tussel sitting to left with bow in her hair.  
(below) Anna Tussel



## DON SMITH REMEMBERS TUSSEL FAMILY FARM

It was by chance that the old Tussel dairy farm was mentioned in an article about Joe Aprile in the February 2016 issue of the Peterstown newspaper at about the same time that Anne Tussel passed away at the age of 102. The Tussel dairy farm was located on the corner of Fourth Avenue and Redcliff Street. The farm was long gone by the time the Aprile family moved in. The article stirred memories in the readers about the Tussel family farm, including Anne's son Donald Smith Jr.

Michael Tussel was the family patriarch. His wife was Magdalena. They had four children in this order; Mary (born in Europe) Jacob, Michael, and Anna. Michael Tussel passed in 1938 and Magdalena in 1950.

Mary married Mike Lassel. They had two children; Arthur and Evelyn. Both have passed. Mary Tussel Lassel passed in 1987 and Mike Lassel in 1956.

Jacob married Blanche. They had four children; Jean, Robert, Jacob Jr. and Connie. Of the four only Connie survives. Jacob Tussel passed in 1969 and Blanche in 1997.

Michael (aka Mickey) married Helen. They had two children; Ronnie and Richie. Both have passed. Mickey Tussel passed in 1994 and Helen in 2003.

Anna married Donald Smith. They had one child, Donald Smith Jr. Anna passed in 2016 and Donald Sr. in 1991. Anna was good friends with Ann Peters, nee Stocker. The Stocker family also operated a dairy farm adjacent to the Tussel dairy farm.

Don remembers playing in the house in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The inside was magnificent, with large rooms and a majestic staircase. At that time his family lived in a second floor apartment.



(above, l-r) Family and friends on Tussel farm in Peterstown identified Donald Smith Jr. the best he can, Jacob Tussel kneeling next to the cow, next to Jacob is Magdalena Tussel (my grandmother), perhaps the woman standing to the left of Magdalena is Mary Tussel, the dapper man kneeling next to Magdalena is her husband Michael Tussel (my grandfather), the little girl sitting on the ground in front of Michael is my mom Anna Smith, further to the left in the dark suit is I believe Michael Tussel Jr. I suspect the Stocker family is in the photo as well. I believe the other girl sitting on the ground with a bow in her hair is Ann Stocker Peters.



(above) Blanche with Jean, Jake, Connie and Bob.



(above, l-r) Tussel homestead and Dairy farm's storage shed, chicken coop and cow barn.

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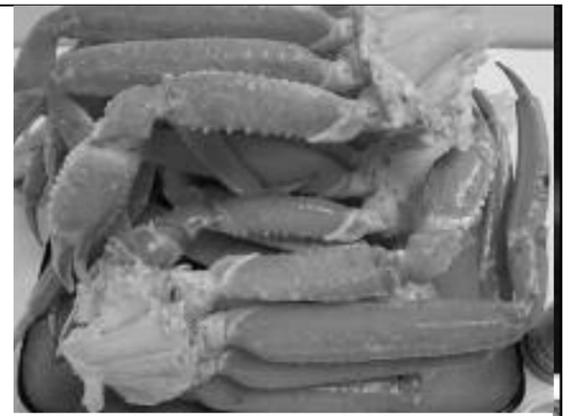
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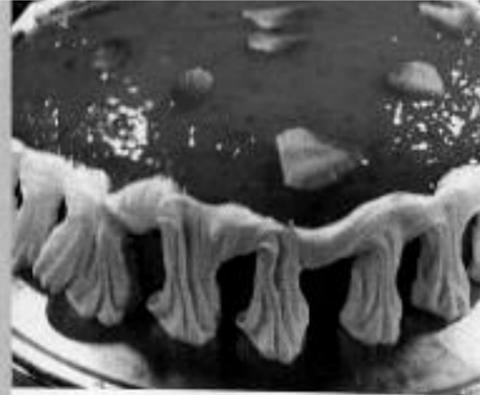
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