



# Tontitown Storia

Newsletter of the Tontitown Historical Museum (THM)

A Department of the City of Tontitown  
Summer 2022, Vol. 17, No. 1



## Saluti from the Board

Ciao from the Tontitown Historical Museum board members! We have lots of good news to share with you. First, earlier this summer, we reopened the museum for drop-in visits. We are happy to be open Friday, Saturday, and Sunday from 1:00-4:00 pm again. We are excited to continue to share the history of Tontitown with you all.

It was a busy spring for the Tontitown Historical Museum. On March 14, we hosted the Italians of Sunnyside, The History – from 1895, Second Edition book discussion and signing with Dr. Anthony Borgognoni and our own Dr. Rebecca "Becky" Howard. We were fortunate to also have author Elizabeth "Libby" Olivi Borgognoni visit with us via Facetime from Lake Village, Arkansas. Thank you to the Tontitown Winery for generously hosting us in their wonderful space. Dr. Borgognoni and Dr. Howard provided enlightening insight, also found in the book, about the original Italian settlers who came to the Sunnyside Cotton Plantation and the experiences that led part of the group to migrate north to found Tontitown. We were happy that so many people turned out to be a part of this discussion and pick up a signed copy of the Italians of Sunnyside book.



Dr. Anthony Borgognoni talks with his mother, author Libby Borgognoni via Facetime



Dr. Rebecca Howard signs a book for Erica Ceola, visiting from Recoaro Terme, Italy



Left Photo, l-r:  
Chris Ranalli,  
Heather Ranalli-  
Peachee, Jennifer  
De Martino, Dr.  
Rebecca Howard

Right photo:  
Dr. Anthony  
Borgognoni

In early June, rescheduled from late May due to rainy weather, we held **Tontitown Heritage Day** at Harry Sbanotto Park. For the first time ever, we partnered with the Tontitown Market to combine forces and host a day as unique as Tontitown. Michael Pianalto provided amazing live music, the Shiloh Museum of Ozark History had an interactive quilt table, and a hot dog lunch provided and served by Centennial Bank complete with cookies from Ranalli Farms Produce. This was also our Second Annual Cake and Pie Auction with baked goods donated from Mama Z's, Village Inn, and Araiza Bakery. We had so many community members come together to help make this event a success and Grazie Mille to everyone who attended. The weather was almost as good as the conversation and community.



Michael Pianalto



Judy Costello,  
Shiloh Museum

Thank you for another amazing spring and summer. We greatly appreciate your support for our community and our museum. We hope to see you soon!

### ***In This Issue***

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## Artifact Spotlight – 1953 Queen Concordia Trophy

by Katherine Karras, Museum Volunteer



In 1953 at the 55th Tontitown Grape Festival, Dolores "Nina" Ceola Moody was crowned Queen Concordia. She received this trophy, with the inscription:

Front:  
55th  
TONTITOWN GRAPE FESTIVAL  
DOLORES CEOLA  
QUEEN CONCORDIA-LV  
Tontitown, Arkansas  
1953

Back:  
PRESENTED BY  
PERONA MILLING CO.  
LOUIS PERONA

The Tontitown Grape Festival, originally beginning in the early 1900s, has selected a Queen through a number of different means. These have included selling the most raffle tickets, or even having the candidate's name drawn from a hat!

### 55<sup>th</sup> Grape Festival Queen Candidates ~ 1953



Mary Catherine  
Fiori



Dolores (Nina)  
Ceola



Frances  
Verucchi

### 55<sup>th</sup> Queen Concordia ~ 1953



Dolores (Nina) Ceola

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## Museum Entrance Update

by Misty Piazza, Museum Board President



If you have driven past the Tontitown Historical Museum recently, you will see that the museum has upgraded a ramp to our entrance. Christopher Guy and others from Boy Scout Troop 81 built this for us as Christopher's Eagle Scout project. Troop 81 spent two weekends putting in the new ramp. Christopher and his family live in Cave Springs, Arkansas, and are always finding ways to give back to the community. Christopher graduated Summa Cum Laude and 3rd in his class from Classical Academy in Bentonville. He was accepted into the Honors College at the University of Arkansas and is majoring in Engineering. We are so thankful for their knowledge and energy to make this dream a reality for us here at the Tontitown Historical Museum. Now everyone will be able to easily enter the museum.



Christopher Guy



### ***BECOME AN AMICI MEMBER TODAY!***

Join by completing and mailing the form at the end of our newsletter or by going to our website at [tontitown.com/tontitown/museum](http://tontitown.com/tontitown/museum). Play a part in preserving the heritage of Tontitown for generations to come. Renew annual memberships in January or at the Annual Tontitown Reunion and Old-Fashioned Polenta Smear.

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## Thank You, Bill Gaiche

by Katherine Karras, Museum Volunteer



Bill & Janet Gaiche

The Tontitown Historical Museum Board would like to give a heartfelt thank you to Bill Gaiche. He is a staunch supporter of the museum, attends all of our events, and even helps out as a carpenter when needed. Bill built our beautiful bookshelf (pictured above on the left) and a second Memorial board (pictured center) since our first was completely full. Grazie Mille, Bill! Thank you for your dedication to the museum!

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## Staff/Board Member Spotlight

with Riley Tessaro, Museum Board Member

- What is your hometown?
  - Tontitown, Arkansas.
- How long have you been living in Northwest Arkansas?
  - All my life, except when I attended high school at Subiaco Academy in Subiaco, Arkansas and then joined the Air Force. In the 1950s to the 1970s, I was stationed in Thailand, Spain, Germany, South Carolina, and Alaska. Then, I moved our family back “home” to Tontitown.
- What is your role at the Tontitown Historical Museum?
  - I have been a THM Board member since 2006, and served as Vice-President from 2007 to 2011.
- What are your hobbies?
  - As a kid, and then even in the service, I played baseball. I played some for the traveling Tontitown team. We played in neighboring towns like West Fork, Elkins, and Paragould. I also played tennis at Subiaco Academy. I have always enjoyed playing bocce and gardening.
  - I have been a THM Board member since 2006, and served as Vice-President from 2007 to 2011.
- What makes you the happiest?
  - Lots of things. Mainly when I’m spending time with friends and family.
- What made you interested in getting involved in the THM?
  - Frank Maestri and Andy Franco asked me to help, and I was happy to. I have many memories of the Bastianelli home that houses the museum. When I was a young boy, every other day, I would carry two buckets of well water from the convent by the old Tontitown School to the Bastianelli house. It seemed like a pretty long way, and the water buckets were heavy.
- What aspect of your role do you enjoy the most?
  - The different things we do to preserve Tontitown's history.
- In three words/phrases, how would you describe the mission and work of THM?
  - Interesting, Important. Continuing to honor the people who started Tontitown.



# Learn How to...Make Italian Lemon Ricotta Cookies

by Zita Mae Mantegani Greenlee

## Italian Lemon Ricotta Cookies

1 C butter	1 T vanilla
2 C sugar	1 tsp. baking powder
2 eggs	1 tsp. baking soda
1 (16oz) ricotta cheese	4 C flour

Preheat oven to 350°

Grease cookie sheets or use parchment paper.

In a large bowl cream butter and sugar. Beat in eggs, one at a time.

Stir in ricotta and vanilla.

Mix flour, baking powder and baking soda in a small bowl to combine. Stir dry mixture into cheese mixture. Drop by rounded teaspoonful onto cookie sheet.

Bake 8-10 minutes (cookies will start to brown slightly around edges) Allow to cool on cookie sheet for 5 min. before removing to wire rack. Cool completely before icing.

Icing: 3 C powdered sugar  
5 T lemon juice

Stir together until smooth. Dip cookies and place on wire rack to dry. (Water or milk may be added 1 tsp at a time to make a thinner consistency.)

Makes about 6 doz. 2 inch cookies



Thank you, Amici members, for your 2022 (marked with an asterisk \*) and 2021 memberships! Your support means the world to us and helps us continue to preserve our history. A membership form to renew your membership or to become a new member is at the end of this newsletter. ***Grazie Mille, Amici!***

### Heritage

Family of Frank & Evelyn Maestri\*  
Family of Dick & Bernice Ardemagni McCauley  
Family of Joe & Theresa Moore\*

### Concordia

Jeff & Kay Franco\*  
Kris & Stacey Hanby\*  
Janette Ceola Rogers\*

Pete & Elaine Sbanotto\*  
Gary & Sheryl Shores\*

### Amici

Bill Ardemagni\*  
Loyce & Mary Ardemagni\*  
Richard & Bernadette Ardemagni\*  
Dennis & Billie Bariola\*  
Barbara Begnel Buckley  
Jim & Sheila Perona Canup\*  
Holly Childs\*  
Bryan & Bev Cortiana-McEuen\*  
Jennifer De Martino\*  
Eric & Julie den Boer\*  
Genevieve (Genny) Della Rosa Deutsch\*  
Mark & Annette Pianalto Drake\*  
Laura Faraci\*  
Mark & Melissa Franco\*  
Raymond & Pauline Franco\*  
David & Amanda Frazier\*  
Craig & Carla Gourley\*  
Adrienne Morsani Graham  
Ken & Deloris Pianalto Green\*  
Betty Hinshaw\*

Leona Della Rosa Kasting\*  
Gina Criman Lankston (Bruno Stolfi family)\*  
Leland & Mary Cortiana Lawrenz\*  
Allyn Lord  
M&M Tile Company  
Leslie "Red" Maestri\*  
Cheryl Ardemagni Martin\*  
James McConnell\*  
Jim & Kathy Pianalto Miller\*  
Bill & Marilyn Mussino\*  
Carolyn Page\*  
Evelyn Pellin\*  
Ralph & Nancy Pendergraft (R&N Builders)\*  
Chris & Annette Pianalto  
Sharon Pianalto\*  
Vince & Sandy Pianalto\*  
Oronina Stolfo  
Philip & Mary Ann Taldo\*  
Tim & Melissa Tessaro\*  
Tontitown Winery

### Family

Kurt & Penny Anderson\*  
Bernice Bariola\*  
Pauline Bariola\*  
Bill & Penny Baskin\*  
Bob & Patty Besom\*  
Robert & Ida Taldo Brady\*  
Vic Faraci\*  
D. Claud Fields, Jr.\*  
Rep. Charlotte Fite\*  
Bary & Jennifer Pianalto Gills\*  
Eugenia Hartman\*  
Phill & Kathy Bariola Laursen\*

James & Xyta Lucas  
Karla Ardemagni McKinley\*  
Brad & Megan Merrick\*  
Stephanie Begnel Mullane\*  
Ben & Loretta Pianalto Pappani\*  
David & Heather Ranalli Peachee  
Mike & Denise Pianalto Pearce\*  
Bernard & Sherry Pianalto  
Vince Pianalto  
Celia Cigainero Stigall\*  
Jim & Janice Pianalto Swearingen\*  
Max & Kay Taldo

## Amici Members

### Individual

Sandy Christopherson\*  
 Andrea Penzo Hale\*  
 Michael Hartman  
 Marjorie A. Pianalto Horinek\*  
 Sharon Maestri

Roger Pianalto  
 Ruth Fiori Poynor\*  
 Margi Maestri Tucker  
 Leticia "Tish" Ceola Wilson\*

### Senior Family

Frank & Sharon Ardemagni\*  
 Ahmad H. Bayyari  
 Forest & Carolyn Bowen, Jr.\*  
 Rick & Kathy Brunetti\*  
 Doyle & Jeanette Burditt  
 Denis & Margie Ceola\*  
 Larry & Betty Dutton  
 Robert & Linda Elia\*  
 Jettie Franco\*  
 Bill & Janet Gaiche\*  
 Bill & Marty Green\*  
 Tommy & Zita Greenlee\*  
 Eddie & Nancy Guinn

Jerry & Dorothy Kever\*  
 Danny & Pat Pellin\*  
 Michael & Rhonda Pellin\*  
 Claude & Agatha Penzo\*  
 Richard & Antoinette Pianalto\*  
 Phillip & Margaret Piazza\*  
 Norbert & Judy Ranalli\*  
 Fred & Ruth Ann Roso Ritchie  
 Larry & Cindy Sabatini\*  
 Gary & Deanna Shackelford\*  
 Truman & Dolores Stamps\*  
 Norman & Carol Walker\*  
 Ron & Toni Maestri Wirts\*

### Senior Individual

Loretta Brunetti\*  
 Jim Cortiana\*  
 Norma Deines\*  
 Ellen Verucchi Goff  
 Patsy Taldo Phillips Graham\*  
 Mary Catherine Neil\*  
 Carmelita Franco Newquist\*  
 Brenda Pianalto\*  
 Cindy Pianalto\*

Elizabeth Pianalto\*  
 Martha Pianalto\*  
 Deborah Pierce\*  
 Patricia Pianalto Simoni\*  
 Marty Taldo  
 Riley Tessaro\*  
 Mary Frances Maestri Vaughan\*  
 Nova Jean Fiori Watson\*  
 Dolores J. Wilson\*

### Lifetime (Level Retired in 2014)

Loyce & Mary Ardemagni  
 Richard & Bernadette Ardemagni  
 Kenneth Brock  
 Mike & Bernadette Pianalto Collins  
 Genevieve (Genny) Della Rosa Deutsch  
 Paul & Dolores Maestri Stolfi Dicks  
 Leona Della Rosa Kasting  
 Allyn Lord  
 Frank & Evelyn Maestri  
 Lawrence McGlone

Frank & Carol Morsani  
 Art & Joyce Penzo  
 Clint Penzo  
 Shawn & Letty Penzo  
 Henry & Charlotte Piazza  
 Robert Serio  
 Dennis & Evelyn Shaw  
 Mary Costa Wersky-Colombero  
 Mike & Toni Zulpo

## *~ Donations in Memory and in Honor ~*

*It is with gratitude and pride that we display Memorial and Honorarium (H)  
donation plaques in the Tontitown Historical Museum.*

Beato & Violet Haney Ardemagni Cathy Ardemagni Cecil Ardemagni Gene & Irma Taldo Ardemagni Mike & Loyce Ardemagni Gene Baker Leo Baudino Don & Philomene Ardemagni Begnel Kathleen Brock Kenneth Brock C.J. and Olivia Pianalto Cigainero Cel & Mary Ceola Cortiana Gilbert & Lucia "Shortie" Cortiana Gordon & Imogene Ardemagni Cortiana Rudy Costa Candida Morsani Crane Lynda Cross Albina Ranalli Dalla Rosa Angelo & Irene Gaiche Dalla Rosa James & Dominica Dalla Rosa Barbara Ann Verucchi Faraci Bill & Fern Haney Fiori Pete & Mary Cortiana Fiori Joseph Angelo "Andy" Franco Chuck & Mary Fucci Emelio & Caterina Piazza Gaiche Rita Taldo Gillis Lillian Cortiana Granata Tommy Granata Russell Greenlee Phyllis Brunetti Hale Clementine Morsani Haney Betty Hinshaw (H) Anita "Sunny" Hinshaw Lee Wana Keck Anna Morsani Kitchell Michael & Dawn Hinshaw Latham family (H)	Albano & Agnes Pierce Maestri Frank Maestri Lynn Maestri Paul & Judy Maestri's 50th Anniversary Annabelle Lee Pozza Miller Amerigo Morsani Frank & Carol Morsani (H) Helen Crane Morsani Denise Pellin Andrew Floyd Penzo Arthur Penzo (H) Ed & Adele Bariola Penzo The Perona Family Claudine Penzo Pianalto Frank & Clara Fiori Pianalto Gabriel & Elsie Mae Fiori Pianalto George (Giacinto) & Clara Pianalto Leo & Lucy Ceola Pianalto Pete & Lucy "Lou" Franco Pianalto Charlotte Piazza Henry Piazza (H) John Hugo "J.H." Pozza Nancy Jean Roso Robbins Lizabeth Roso Margaret Taldo Roso Gloria Mae Maestri Sallis Harry & Dorothy Fiori Sbanotto Agatha Morsani Smith Lillian Pianalto Smith Marie Tessaro Raymond & Juanita Toler Bruce Vaughan Daniel "Danny" Ray Watson James & Luellen Penzo Weiss Elizabeth Morsani Williams Leon & Sally Verucchi Zullo
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## Tontitown Historical Museum Board Members, 2022

*Tontitown Storia* is published by the Tontitown Historical Museum Board. Please submit story ideas or comments to Ethan Oxford [museum@tontitownar.gov](mailto:museum@tontitownar.gov).

Misty Piazza, President  
Jennifer De Martino, Vice President  
Emily Pianalto-Beshears, Secretary  
Bev Cortiana-McEuen, Treasurer

Caroline Franco-Ceola  
Heather Ranalli-Peachee  
Ethan Oxford  
Riley Tessaro

Note: Photograph credits and Grazie Mille to former THM Board member and photographer Brenda Pianalto for taking wonderful photos at all our events.

**Tontitown Historical Museum**  
**Open Friday, Saturday and Sunday 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.**  
**Call or email to schedule a special visit.**

**Contact us:**  
**(479) 361-9800**  
**[museum@tontitownar.gov](mailto:museum@tontitownar.gov)**

**251 E. Henri de Tonti Boulevard**  
**P.O. Box 144**  
**Tontitown, AR 72770**

### 2022 Museum and Community Events

Date	Event
Monday, October 31	Tontitown Halloween in the Park
Sunday, November 6	20th Annual Tontitown Reunion and Old-Fashioned Polenta Smear



251 E. Henri de Tonti Boulevard  
P.O. Box 144  
Tontitown, Arkansas 72770



*"So Big,  
This Little  
Museum"*

**Benefits**

- Satisfaction in supporting the growth of the Tontitown Historical Museum to preserve and protect the heritage of Tontitown.
- 10% discount on Museum purchases
- Amici gift

**Mail your tax-deductible check to:**

Tontitown Historical Museum  
P.O. Box 144  
Tontitown, AR 72770  
(or give to any Museum Board member)

**Annual *Amici* Membership Levels**

- ☐ Individual – \$15
- ☐ Family – \$20
- ☐ Senior Individual – \$10
- ☐ Senior Family – \$15
- ☐ Amici – \$50 to \$249
- ☐ Concordia – \$250 to \$499
- ☐ Heritage – \$500+

**Renew  
or Join  
Today!**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_

STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

**Volunteers are the backbone of Tontitown Historical Museum. May we call on you to volunteer?** ☐ Yes!