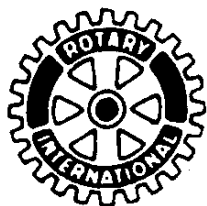


Check our web site – [www.waunakeerotary.org](http://www.waunakeerotary.org)



## Waunakee Rotary Club

Jan. 4, 2007  
Vol. 40 No. 25

Italian Americans have come a long way since their descendants immigrated in the late 1800s and early 1900s. And that was due to their hard work and the opportunities offered by the United States, said Dominic Pulera, an author who is writing a book on the Italian American experience.

Dominic said 3.2 percent of the state's population is of Italian American descent. Nearly 11 percent of Kenosha's population is Italian American. Many Italian Americans in Wisconsin are half German, reflecting the large numbers of German immigrants who settled in the state.

Dominic related some stories that reveal the progress Italian Americans have made. They also reveal the progress of the United States in general.

A Rockford, Ill. woman related to Dominic that her parents came to the U.S. seeking opportunities unavailable in Italy. Her father went shopping for shoes at a local thrift store and brought home only boys shoes – which she wore until she left school to work at a knitting mill for a semi-monthly salary of \$5. Today, nearly all Italian American's have an ample opportunity to earn a decent wage.

Another woman in the Bronx, N.Y. who is now in her mid 60s told Dominic that she was embarrassed by the Italian lunches she brought to school. Often, she dumped her lunch in a vacant lot on the way to school. Today, Italian food is popular in the U.S. Burger King advertises its Italian chicken sandwich.

Another Italian American whose family moved to Kenosha from one of the poorest areas of southern Italy worked four jobs to earn his bachelor's degree in education from UW-Madison in 1941. When he interviewed for a teaching job, he was told he would need to change his

name. He rejected that offer to keep his family's name. Today, many Italian Americans who did change their names opt to take their original names back.

Dominic also said Italian Americans were barred from dance halls in the 1930s. But in 1941, after Pearl Harbor, many Italian Americans enlisted in the U.S. military and Italian American women helped out on the home front. Afterwards, they were more embraced.

About 70 percent of the Italians who emigrated to America between 1880 and 1924 could not read or write. They started largely at the bottom and worked their way up, Dominic said.

"It is nothing short of remarkable," Dominic said about the group's progress through the years. They worked hard and embraced their new homeland. And credit should be given to the United States, which provides economic opportunities for immigrants.

Most people in the mainstream do not take notice of the progress, he said, perhaps because there are so many milestones. Today, two of nine justices of the Supreme Court are Italian American, and older generations are proud.

"The Italian American story is the quintessential American story of faith and love and work. It is one that belongs to every one of us, regardless of our background," Dominic said.

#### Other items:

- The Rotary In Lights take down is set for Jan. 6, Tom Reis reported. Volunteers will also work during the week and could use help.

- Jeremiah Gollon urged club members to RSVP for the Christmas party Jan. 26. Include your choice of dinner – prime rib, shrimp or chicken cordon bleu. A sign-up sheet is going around if you missed the invitation

### OFFICERS

DREW LAWRENCE, PRESIDENT • LYNNE SPIELMAN, PRESIDENT-ELECT  
PHIL WILLEMS, CLUB SECRETARY  
BOB PULVERMACHER, RECORDING SECRETARY • KIM LENGFELD, TREASURER

### DIRECTORS

ED NIEBUHR • LORI DERAUF  
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### Calendar of Events:

Jan. 26, Christmas party  
April 12-29, Russian visitors  
May 4-6, District Conference

in  
the recent newsletter.

Guests: Chris Leonard, guest of Jim Leonard; Terry Endres, guest of Ed Endres; Linda Schmitz, guest of Jim Schmitz; Dan Muxfeld, guest of Robert Pulvermacher.

Visiting Rotarians: George Keehn, Downtown.

Birthdays: Jan. 9, Bob Pulvermacher.

Anniversaries: None.

Prayers: Jan. 4, Pat Durden; Jan. 11, Msgr. Kramer; Jan. 18, Susan Vergeront; Jan. 25, Leonard Allen.

Programs: Jan. 4, Club Assembly; Jan. 11, Brian Knox of W.D. Hoard & Sons, Waunakee Tribune publisher; Jan. 18, DNR on Health and Environment.

Greeters: Dec. 28, Ed Endres, Rex Endres; Jan. 4, Gary Epping, Bill Erickson; Jan. 11, Mike Fehrenbach, Betsy Flanagan

## Make up meetings online

It's easy to make up a meeting on the Internet. The site is [www.rotaryclubone.org](http://www.rotaryclubone.org). Print out the form and give it to Phil Willems, the club secretary.