



La Notizia Italiana

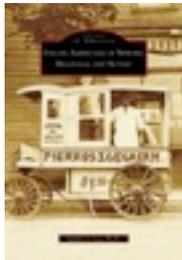


POINTers in Person: Lou Costello Chapter #15

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Twisting on the Streets of Passaic in Honor of Native Rocker

Sunday, September 19, 2010

BY RICHARD COWEN
THE RECORD
STAFF WRITER



*Joey DiNicola and The Starliters play a concert in Passaic Sunday, September 19.
TYSON TRISH/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER*

It was time to twist again on Sunday as the City of Passaic paid an all-star tribute to one of its homegrown rock-n-roll stars, Joey Dee and The Starliters. City officials named the intersection of Washington Place and Columbia Avenue after the group, which reached [the top of the Billboard charts in 1962 with "The Peppermint Twist."](#) Dee, whose real name is Joseph DiNicola, grew up on Washington Place and performed a free concert before a crowd estimated at 700 people.

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Joey Dee and The Starliters were joined onstage by other local rock luminaries, including members of The Shirelles, who are also from Passaic, and Dave and Eddie Brigati, two Garfield brothers who were in the band, "The Rascals. Joey Dee did his patented "Peppermint Twist" and "Shout": and a served as bandleader for a medley of Rascals' hits, including "Groovin'" "Good Lovin" and "It's a Beautiful Morning." The Shirelles closed the show with renditions of their smash hits, "Mama Said" and "Soldier Boy."

The ceremony was led by Marc Auerbach, the Passaic City historian, who read a letter sent by Governor Christie thanking Joey Dee for staying in touch with his New Jersey roots. There were also honors sent by Rep. William J. Pascrell, Jr. (D-Paterson) who entered Joey Dee and The Starliters into the Congressional Record.

DiNicola grew up at in three-family walkup at 84 Washington Place, with nine brothers and sisters. The house still stands, although part of the neighborhood was demolished to make way for Route 21 in the late 1960s.

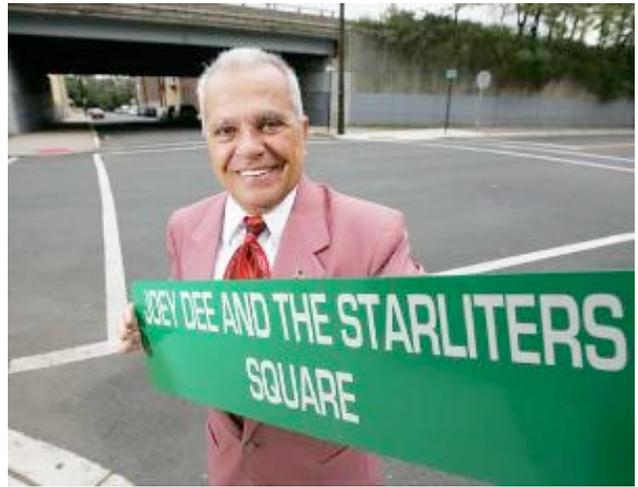
DiNicola, 73, said he was deeply honored by the tribute. He thanked everyone for their support, but paid special tribute to two people who were not at the ceremony on Sunday.

"Most of all, I would like to thank my mother and father," he said. "I will return to this place often, as will my children and grandchildren."



From left, Anthony Sciuto, Ernie Intorella, Dee, Rogers Freeman, Dave McLean and Vinnie Corea of Joey Dee and the Starliters.

Passaic Rocker Who Made "Twist" Famous Honored



KEVIN R. WEXLER/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Joey Dee at Washington Place and Columbia Avenue. He and his band took 'The Peppermint Twist' to No. 1 in 1962.

Saturday, September 18, 2010

BY RICHARD COWEN
THE RECORD
STAFF WRITER

Nearly 50 years ago, Joey Dee leaned into a microphone in a cramped New York City nightclub and sang the words that have taken him "round and round and up and down" from the city of Passaic ever since:

"Well, they've got a new dance and it goes like this...." *Yeah, the name of the dance is the Peppermint Twist.*"

The name of the club was the Peppermint Lounge. The name of the song is — what else? — "The Peppermint Twist," the tune Joey Dee and his group, the Starliters, rode all the way to the top of the Billboard charts in the winter of 1962.

On Sunday, September 19, Joey Dee and the Starliters twisted again — at Washington Place and Columbia Avenue in Passaic, where city officials will name the intersection after the singer, born Joey DiNicola, and his band. The group then performed a free concert.

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"This is beautiful," said DiNicola, who is now 73 and who lives in Clearwater, Fla., with his wife, Joan. "It's a real culmination of all the years we spent making music. And music has been really great to me."

Although "The Peppermint Twist" was their only No. 1 record, the group hit the Billboard charts five times in 1962 and 1963. And when the Twist craze went global, the group could briefly lay claim to being bigger than the Beatles. In fact, the Beatles opened for Joey Dee and the Starlites during a European tour in November 1963.

More lasting is the Starlites' status as a live act with a revolving door of performers, many of whom would go on to become stars. Jimi Hendrix was a Starlitter in 1965, when he was known as Jimmy James. The girl group The Ronettes (famous for "Be My Baby" and "Baby I Love You") got their start with the Starlites in 1961.

The actor Joe Pesci once played guitar in the group, and three members of the rock group the Rascals — Eddie Brigati of Garfield, and Felix Cavaliere and Gene Cornish — were Starlites early in their careers.

"I remember auditioning Jimi Hendrix in my garage when I was living in Lodi," DiNicola recalls. "He was one of the warmest people I've ever met. "And no one could play like that."

The son of a plumber and a stay-at-home mom, DiNicola grew up with nine brothers and sisters in a three-family walkup at 84 Washington Place. The house is still there, although part of the neighborhood was demolished to make way for Route 21 in the late 1960s.

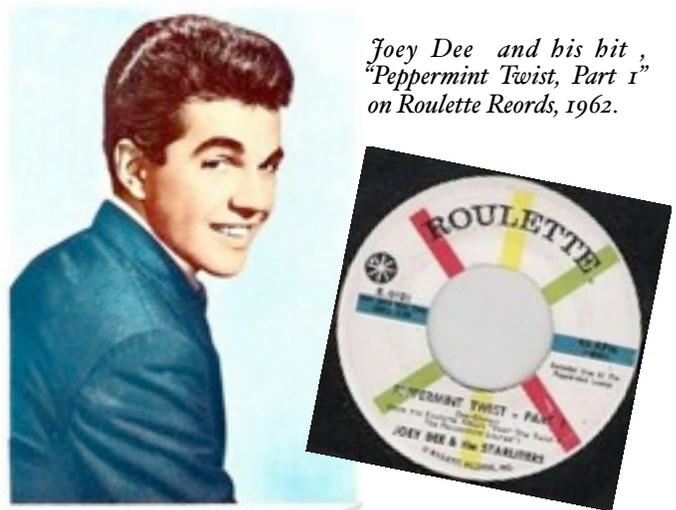
DiNicola started playing music after his sister brought home a clarinet from school. This being the dawn of rock-and-roll, that clarinet soon became a saxophone in Joey's hands, and he graduated from Passaic High School in 1955.

He started a group called the Thunder Trio that hit the sock hop circuit, playing high school gyms. The group featured Joey on saxophone, John Yanik on guitar, and Anthony "Dutchie" Sciuto on drums. Yanik became a Passaic cop and is now deceased. Sciuto joined the Marine Corps, then went to law school, and eventually became a Superior Court judge in Bergen County. Now retired from the bench, Sciuto is still drumming with the Starlites. The group was doing a gig at a nightclub called Oliveri's in Lodi in 1961 when a talent scout called to say a new club, the Peppermint Lounge in New York City, needed a house band.

Hank Ballard had written a new dance called "The Twist," which Chubby Checker took to No. 1. Joey Dee and the Starlites added their own "Peppermint Twist" and the fad reached its zenith.

Celebrities began pouring into the Peppermint Lounge after two Broadway columnists, Early Wilson and Cholly Knickerbocker, wrote about the hip-shaking dance craze. Marilyn Monroe, Norman Mailer — even the reclusive Greta Garbo — were all spotted twisting on the Peppermint Lounge's tiny dance floor.

The kid from Passaic who once had aspirations to be a history teacher was suddenly making history. "Nat 'King' Cole, Shirley McLaine, on the dance floor," DiNicola recalls. "That was just incredible." E-mail: cowen@northjersey.com



Joey Dee and his hit, "Peppermint Twist, Part 1" on Roulette Records, 1962.

From Italy to America:
POINT Member Dr. Sandra Lee
Presents Her Exhibition in Bloomfield



"From Italy to America: Faces of Italian Immigrants/Italian Americans" featuring images from POINT member Dr. Sandra Lee's Nutley/Belleville/Newark Project was shown at the Bloomfield Oakeside Cultural Center during the month of October. Oakeside Mansion is a poignant location for this exhibit. Many Italian immigrants worked at Oakes Mill in the early 1900's.

Curated by POINT member Dr. Sandra Lee, (pictured above at the reception on October 6) a professor in the College of Education and Human Services, and a Research Associate in the Alberto Institute of Italian Studies, the exhibit was based on images Dr. Lee collected for Italian Americans of Newark, Belleville, & Nutley, published by Arcadia Press. In this ethnographic study of old Italian neighborhoods from the 1880's to the 1950's, she interviewed and collected vintage photographs from individuals and families. More than 250

people took part in the making of this book, including another POINT member, our Vice President, Sue Berman. Scans of old photographs and family histories of Italian immigrants and their families in Newark, Belleville, and Nutley are still being collected.

The opening reception was Wednesday, October 6, from 6 - 8PM. The reception was free and open to the public. Food was provided by Nicasastro Gourmet Sauces (of the old Nicasastro's Restaurant in Newark!) The reception was attended by many interested in Italian heritage and culture. Among the attendees were POINT members Al & Michele Marotta, Annita Zalenski, and Maria Carparelli. The raffle prize was won by Michele Marotta.

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Pictured above:
Images from the exhibit.

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"From Italy to America: Faces of Italian Immigrants/Italian Americans" preserves part of the lives and the legacy of these brave men and women, and makes them part of our present and our future," Dr. Lee comments.

New images from local families are being added to the collection, and a second book is planned. The photographs are selected for their historical value and interest, and focus on the original neighborhoods, Italian immigrants, and their families and descendants. The vision of this project is to serve the future by preserving the past images of Italian heritage: neighborhoods, families, work, and religious life.

Dr. Lee is a Research Associate in the Alberto Institute of Italian Studies at Seton Hall.

Pictured at right:

Michele Marotta, with her winning raffle basket.

Pictured far right, top:

Al & Michele Marotta viewing photos at the Reception;

Pictured far right, bottom:

More photos on display



Favorite POINT Member Recipes:

Amaretto Cake

Ingredients

2 pkgs. anisette sponge cookies
 2 3.4 oz. pkgs. vanilla pudding cook & serve mix
 2 3.4 oz. pkgs. chocolate pudding cook & serve mix
 6 cups milk
 1 cup Amaretto or Kaluha
 1 cup water

Method

Line bottom of a 10-inch spring form pan with one package of sponge cookies.
 Mix 1 cup of Amaretto with 1/2 cup water.
 Spoon Amaretto mixture over cookies.
 Prepare chocolate pudding with 3 cups of milk.
 Let cool for 5 minutes. Pour over cookie layer.
 Arrange second package of cookies over top of chocolate pudding.

Mix remaining Amaretto with 1/2 cup water and spoon mixture over second cookie layer.

Prepare vanilla pudding with 3 cups of milk. Let cool for 5 minutes.

Pour over second cookie layer.
 Refrigerate for at least 6 to 8 hours.

(Overnight is best.)

Frost with whipped cream or whipped topping.
 Yield: 10 servings

Thanks to: Annita Zalenski

For more POINT member recipes, go to:

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~njpoint/recipes.html>



POINTers in Person

The POINTers In Person program, an autonomous branch of **POINT - (*Pursuing Our Italian Names Together*)** was founded in 1992. Our group, Chapter 15, was organized in September 1996. The 21 nationwide chapters of POINTers In Person provide genealogical researchers an opportunity to meet socially, and learn and share information pertinent to Italian research. Each chapter is independent and sets forth its own procedures and schedules of events.

We cordially invite Italian genealogical researchers to attend our quarterly meetings. Membership is open to all. In addition to regular meetings our group takes occasional field trips to genealogical research sites in the New Jersey/New York area.

Membership in our parent organization, POINT, is not a prerequisite to joining our group; however, it is highly recommended.

IN MEMORY OF
John McNamara III
(husband of Carolyn McNamara)

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 POINTers In Person
 Chapter 15
 Northern New Jersey
 (201) 803-9117

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Your letters and comments are welcomed.
 We reserve the right to edit submitted materials.

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E-mail: LaNotiziar@aol.com
 Web Site: <http://www.rootsweb.com/~njpoint/>

Calendar

POINT Chapter 15 Future Meetings:

Elmwood Park Municipal Building, 10 AM

Future Meetings:

February 5, 2011: Annual Member Exchange

May 7, 2011: *Navigating Key Genealogy Websites*

Presenter: Tony Lauriano

August 6, 2011: To be announced

Passaic County Genealogical Society:

November 13

10 a.m. at the Hawthorne Library:

Genealogy Club Meeting:

Lisa Illowite: *"Brick Walls and Black Sheep"*

December 11

9:30 AM

Hawthorne Library

Genealogy Club Brunch & Silent Auction

Passaic County Historical Society:

November 3

7 PM. at the Little Falls Historical Society:

Society Quarterly Meeting:

Tom Brennan:

"B. Free Franklin"

Lambert Castle Events:

November 5

Holiday House Boutique Preview Night

November 6 - 28

Holiday House Boutique

(Open Tuesday - Sunday)

December 10

Third Annual Wine Tasting

December 11 & 12

Candlelight Tour of Lambert Castle

For more information on PCHS

& Lambert Castle Events:

973- 247-0085 ext 200

www.lambertcastle.org

Genealogy Society of Bergen County:

7PM, Ridgewood Library

November 22

Video Presentation:

"The Extraordinary Journey - The Eastern Europeans of Northeastern Pennsylvania"