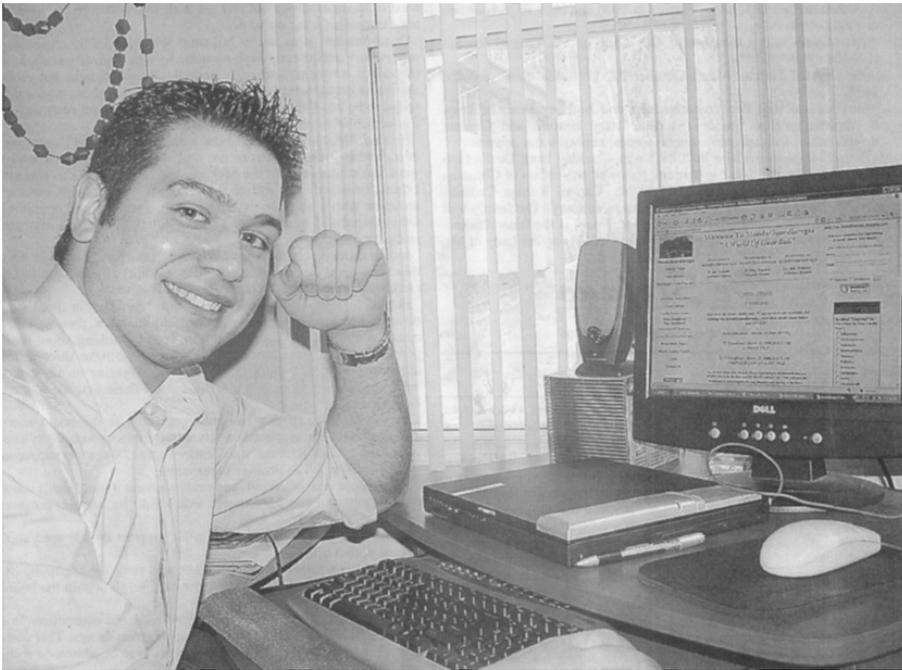


Local Man's Web Site a Success

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By Sarah Brooks
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Peter Farina, a fifth-generation Italian-American and resident of Amsterdam, sits at his computer. Farina is the founder of a Web site for people with roots in Guardiaregia, a tiny Italian village in the province of Campobasso. He plans to expand his project this summer with an online magazine and a main site, www.italyMONDO.com, which will hold information pertaining to Italian ancestry and the history of various Italian townships.

What started as a hobby for Amsterdam resident Peter Farina has evolved into something he never expected.

Farina, 22, is the founder of a Web site for people with roots in Guardiaregia, a tiny Italian village in the province of Campobasso. In the beginning, his site's newsletter was sent to roughly 20 Amsterdam residents who have roots in that village. Now, the membership has expanded to [over] 300 different individuals in nine countries.

Farina plans to expand his project this summer by establishing a main site, www.italyMONDO.com. A user of this site will be able to browse other sister sites which will hold information pertaining to Italian ancestry and the history of various Italian townships, among other things.

He also plans to establish an Italian online magazine called *MONDO!*, which he said will immediately start going out to 10,000 people this fall.

Farina's interest in his culture started when he wanted to learn the language.

While he was a student at Syracuse University he was able to learn Italian, as well as French and Spanish --- which has helped him to answer e-mails from all over the world. Furthermore, the fifth-generation Italian-American wanted to learn about his ancestors' roots in Guardiaregia after finding old pictures and letters in his grandmother's attic.

"I wanted to reach out to where my grandmother's parents came from and where her husband's parents came from," he said.

Farina's newsletter eventually received responses from people from Canada, Australia, and England, just in the first month [April 2005.]

"My site traffic was just unbelievable," he said.

[After] April of 2005, his membership of mainly families in Amsterdam expanded to Switzerland, Venezuela, Belgium, and Brazil, to name [just] a few [countries.]

"Now I'm working to devote my life to the Italian Culture," Farina said.

He left Syracuse University just so that he could devote his time to his research while being a bar manager at Nicolino's in the Town of Amsterdam [He is currently finishing his degree online, in business, at Empire State College.] He said he averages 60 hours a week [working on building his business.]

In keeping up with his research, he has browsed through citizenship papers in county clerk's offices and has indexed all of the Italians that ever came to Montgomery and Fulton counties.

Farina has stumbled across residents of Amsterdam with the last names of Albanese, Bottisti (*Originally Giambattista,*) Francisco (*De Francesco,*) Galeazza, Meola, Sampone (*Sampogna,*) and Vecchiarelli, who have ties to Guardiaregia.

"Eventually every county in upstate [New York] will have this," he said. Farina mentioned he is currently working on Schoharie and Hamilton counties as well.

Farina said a person browsing his future site will be able to look up any Italian last name and link [it to] their ancestors. A browser will also be able to view and buy professional photographs of their family's town of origin in Italy through one of [italyMONDO!'s] sister sites called **MyItalianTown.com**.

Through [another] sister site, **MyItalianAncestor.com**, users can buy vital records and apply for dual citizenship. Farina said in Italy, proof of lineage to an Italian born citizen is needed to do this.

Also, county by county, all the Catholic churches, Italian owned businesses, and the databases featuring Italian immigrants will be available through his site, **UpstateNYItalians.com**.

He hopes to finish his main site this summer with the help of a *"Professional Web Designer,"* he said.

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