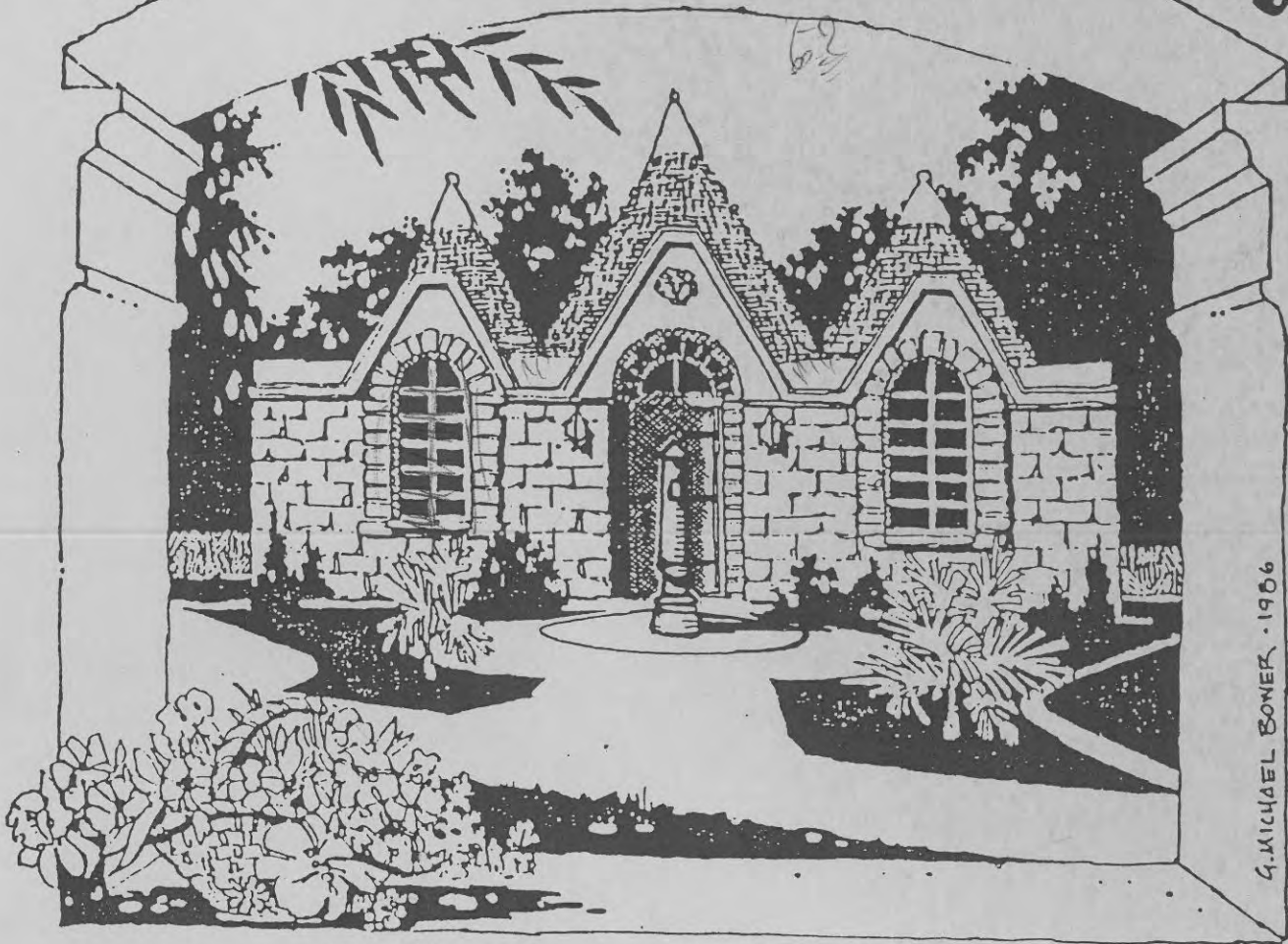
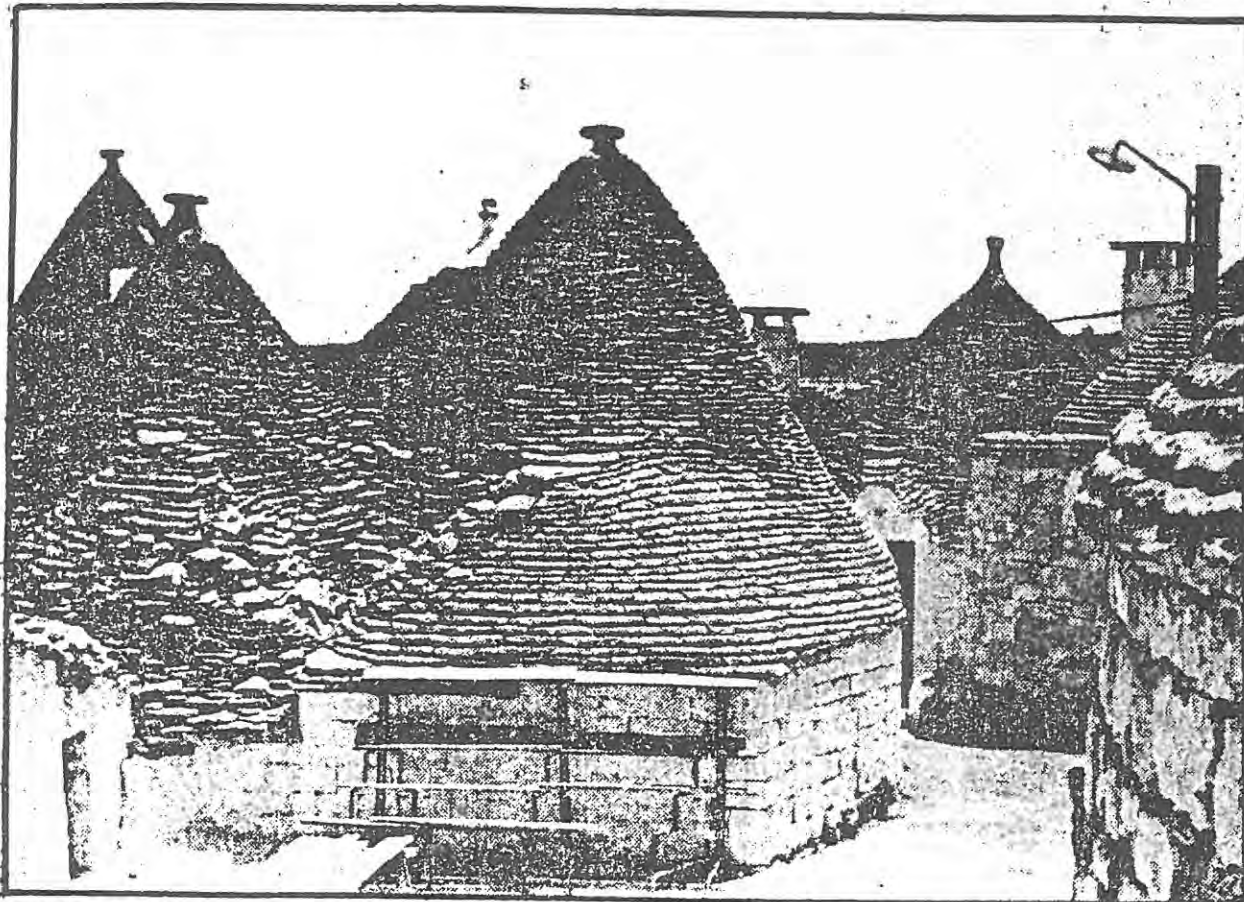


Putignano · Visalia



SISTER CITY





In Alberobello, Italy, the stone roof *trulli* houses are considered national treasures

Nino Lo Bello

Truly unusual houses of Alberobello

By Nino Lo Bello
Special to The Examiner

ALBEROBELLO, Italy — They used to say that only the most intrepid travelers ever ventured into the region of Apulia stretching along the Adriatic shore in the heel of the Italian Boot. That this is undeserved becomes quickly evident to any tourist who comes here to the deep south for a touch of the Arabian Nights.

As you approach Alberobello between the port cities of Brindisi and Bari in a green-tinted landscape dotted with vineyards and olive groves, you see what looms like an Oz created by a master wizard — hundreds upon hundreds of houses with conical tiled roofs pointing seaward. These are the *trulli*.

The Italian government has classified Alberobello as a state monument, which gives the strange town the rating of a national park. Seen from a distance, the *trulli* make you think of the circular huts of straw seen in movies about Africa, but the *trulli* are constructed of stone.

The beginnings of the *trulli* and the origin of the word

(which rhymes with Juliet) are unknown, but there is no doubt as to why stone was used in the construction of these oddball farmhouses: There is no timber in this area. There is, however, a super-abundance of field stones which the residents have to move anyway in order to farm.

Since Italian reference books provide only a squib of information on the *trulli*, a curious visitor has to fall back on local legend. The *trulli* first came into being in the 15th century when this part of Italy was ruled by the Spaniards. There are two accepted local explanations.

One story has it that a noble living in another town once levied a tax on Alberobello's farmers based on the amount of flat roof surface their houses had. In response to this unfair assessment, the farmers built their houses in the conical *trulli* design, which has no flat roof surface.

The other story, generally more accepted here, casts the noble as a hero. Knowing that the king in Naples would raise taxes if the noble's region looked too prosperous, the farmers were told to build homes using only native stone and no mortar. When the king's tax inspectors made their visit, the farmers could quickly pull down the houses and scatter the stones in the fields, making the land look too difficult to cultivate.

Whatever their origins, the *trulli* are not seen anywhere else in Italy. Understandably, the people who live in them are quite proud of their unusual homes, and many of the black-garbed wives sit outside their doorways, inviting passing visitors in for a look.

What always draws the special attention of visitors are the special ornamentations on top of the cones. A roof that ends in a point or a sphere indicates that a male child was born in the house. A flat-type disc or plate-like fixture on the top means the birth of a girl. Painted white decorations on some of the roofs are signs to ward off bad luck.



Casa di pietra (trulli)

PUTIGNANO, ITALY
and
VISALIA, CALIFORNIA

What I am going to do here is give a short story on how the Sister City Idea came about, who was involved, when it started, what has happened since the Putignano Sister City Committee was formed and what our future plans are.

In September, 1979, ten Visalia residents traveled to Europe and ended the trip by spending several days in Putignano, Italythey were....Pete and Carmeline Giotta, Vito A. and Sybil Giotta, Eva and Clarence Miguel, Angelo and Mary Mirizzi and Ida and Lawrence A. Romanazzi. Ida's cousin, Fausta Morea, introduced the group to the Mayor of Putignano, Vito Vinella and a few of his councilmen while we were taking our evening stroll down the main street of Putignano, known as the "Stradone."

The next day, Mayor Vinella invited the group to a reception at Putignano City Hall. We were treated royally and we exchanged ideas about our City and how the two related to each other. We viewed all their old books. Vito A. Giotta was born there and we found his birth registration and the marriage registration of our parents, Nick and Carmela Giotta. Georgette Ricardi White also found registration of her parents.

We all said a few words, I said I was on the Citizens, Advisory Board for the City of Visalia. Mayor Vinella then said, "Wouldn't it be nice if Putignano and Visalia could become Sister City's." We all felt this was a fantastic idea, so I was delegated to contact our Visalia City Council and see how they felt about this idea.

I first talked to Mayor Pete Peterson, who was very interested and in the Spring of 1980, the City Council agreed to set up a Putignano Sister City Committee. I (Ida Romanazzi) became the Chairman of the Committee and the Committee officially began meeting in September 1980. Serving on the Committee when started were Pete Giotta, Luke Bianco, Nat Bradley, Louie Giannandrea, Vito A. Giotta, Steve Luisi, Noel McDermott, Ben Owens, Ida and Lawrence Romanazzi, Mildred Romanzaai, John Schaeffer, Lloyd Trout, Angelo Mirizzi and Georgette White. The City staff person was Susan Vincent. In September 1980, I received a call from Putignano, Italy that 50 people from there were going to come and visit Visalia and complete the Sister City ceremonies. They would be arriving the latter part of November. We met and set our wheels in motion as to housing, entertainment and all the places we would be taking our guests.

On November 23, 1980, the Mayor of Putignano, Vito Vinella, several of his council people and other residents of Putignano, 50 people in all, arrived in San Francisco. We traveled to the airport by Orange Belt and picked them up. We arrived in Visalia early in the morning with our Italian friends. The host families were all at the Sons of Italy Hall to pick up their guests. Some took two couples, some one couple and some three people. We had terrific support from the citizens of Visalia, both Italian and non-Italian speaking.

They spent ten fast moving days in Visalia. The ~~the~~ first day was spent at our City Hall with a fantastic welcome from our Mayor Peterson. That evening, we had a banquet at the Convention Center where gifts were exchanged and the Sister City plans were signed and sealed. We have some beautiful pictures of this evening. Our guests visited many places of interest in Visalia, Sequoia Park (this they really enjoyed), Disneyland, Las Vegas and more. They also had the opportunity to spend Thanksgiving with us at the Sons of Italy Hall. They also had the opportunity to view our Candy Cane Lane Parade and they really enjoyed the parade.

The night before they left, a big reception was held at the Sons of Italy Hall and our guests toasted us and thanked us for everything and more gifts were exchanged.

We took the group back to San Francisco by Orange Belt bus again. They spent a couple of days in San Francisco, then on to New York and home.

Needless to say, they had a good time and some long time friendships were made. In the summer of 1981, the City of Visalia called me and asked what I thought about a Sister City Park and of course we were excited. The other Sister City was not interested at the time so ^{we} were given part of the now Memorial Park. We wanted to put something on this park that would be very effective and beautiful and symbolic of the Puglia area and the building of a Trulli was the "thing" we agreed on. I fell in love with the Trulli when we visited Italy the first time. Pete Giotta took charge of building the Trulli. ~~In August of~~ In August of 1981, nine residents from Visalia

traveled to Putignano, Italy. The mayor at the time, Pete Peterson and his wife Mary went and we took gifts to our people in Putignano. Others going were Pete and Carmeline Giotta, Ida Romanazzi, Georgette White, Lorraine Montemagni, Alice Moore and Louie Bianco. In order to have money to take our gifts, the Committee had several fund raisers such as crab feeds etc. to raise money.

We spent ten days in Putignano and they too had our days full of events. We were wined, ^{over} dined and taken places all ~~other~~ the area around Putignano, all at their expense. We were all put in homes and treated royally!

During the year 1982, most of our time was spent on raising money to start building the Trulli. We also had to meet City Code and it took a long time to get all our approvals. We were also fortunate to get \$100 donations from 48 different families. A plaque is in the Trulli listing all the names. They are; Joe and Rose Storelli from Fresno, James and Honey LaBelle, Lawrence A. and Ida Romanazzi, Mrs. Rosalie Richardi, Mercedes Rocco, Alice Richardi Moore, Scotty and Georgette White, John and Cristina Giotta, Angelo and Mary Mirizzi, Enrico Caruso Lodge-Order Sons of Italy in America of Visalia, Rose Quinn, Joseph and Rosalia LoBue, Mary and Tom Connolly, Lucille V. Trulli, Mary and Pete Peterson, Vito A. and Sybil Giotta, Bessie and Sisto Crosina, Francis and Marguerite Mangine, Vito and Irene Mangine, Steven Sterns, John Hurt A-1 Service, Joe E. and Alice M. Silva, Jean and Dick Hemmingway, Dr. and Mrs. Ralph Arnold, Miller Memorial Chapel, Walter Long, Sr., Joseph and Eileen Coppola, Guy and Gina Simile, Eugene and Mary Ferrero, Al and Dorothy Alberts,

Augustia
Gene and Bry-Ann Rubey, Ralph and ~~Augustia~~ Coppola, Jerry and Donna Pietroforte, Fred and Mary LoBue, John and Maria Notarnicola, Frank and Josephine Ronzano from Fresno, W. G. Curley and Virginia Edginton, Nick and Jessie Notarnicola, Pete and Carmeline Giotta (also donated another \$250), Lee and Pauline Richmond, Larry and Marlene Romanzaai, Donna and Lynn Grist, Edward and Ruth Foster, Frank and Suzanna Luisi, Louie and Italia Giannandrea, Matt and Rose Romanazzi.

On January 9, 1983, a freezing cold day, we had our ground breaking ceremonies with Mayor Berkeley Johnson officiating. Why has it taken so long? The labor is donated, some paid, but mostly donated. We had to keep raising more money, because the building is a replica and had to meet City standards and the farther along it got, the more we wanted on the building. In the meantime, we changed City staff person to Harold Tucker and last year to Ben Owens, who is fantastic person that donated many many hours working on the Trulli as well as writing his "Trulligrams" to the City Council each week.

During the year 1984, we had more people visit Putignano from Visalia getting more ideas on the Trulli, especially on the roof.

In December 1984, 19 students and two instructors came to Visalia from Putignano on an Exchange Student program. They spent 15 days in Visalia. The students were housed in various homes in Visalia and spent time at the three high schools. We had a very busy time planned for them and they got to see San Francisco, Disneyland, Los Angeles Universal Studios, Las Vegas, Sequoia Park and more.

In February 1985, we took 12 students and six adults from Visalia to Putignano. The students were housed in various homes in Putignano and attended classes in various schools. It was carnival season, Mardi Gras, and they really had a good time. Many functions were planned for us while there. We plan to continue the exchange program again next year. Our students also visited Rome, Venice, Pisa, Pompei and Florence. We spent 15 days there.

Our plans for the Trulli; we will be placing many items we have received from Putignano in the building. We plan to have a project later on where the families who came from Putignano will have a display from each family. We have around 30 families who have roots in Putignano living in Visalia with over 500 people stemming from these families. Each family will be given a board where they will "do their thing" about their family tree. The Putignanesi families are; Giotta, Romanazzi, Bianco, Luisi, Barletta, Cino, Certini, DeLeonardis, Giannandrea, Campanella, Laterza, Loliva, Mastrangelo, Lombardi, Mangine, Masi, Mirizzi, Notarnicola, Ricardi, Delano, Lovero, Dreò, Detomasso and Frigulti.

We also plan to use the Trulli for educational exhibits on various countries, art exhibits or shows. It is going to be a cultural center mostly of Italian arts. We also plan to start an Italian Festival on Columbus Day in October...something that has not been done in Visalia.

On Sunday, April 27, 1986, we are having our dedication of the Trulli. Senator Rose Ann Vuich, Vice Consul General Edward Fanucchi, Mayor Bonnel Pryor,

Supervisor Lori Mangine, State President of the Sons of Italy A. J. Accurso and President of the Visalia Sons of Italy, Lee Richmond, will be present. We will have music, all kinds of good Italian food, dancing and games. Everyone is invited to attend. The dedication is taking place on the Memorial park, corner of Hall and Main Streets. The festivities will start around 1:00 p.m., first with the dedication which will feature the singing of the U. S. National Anthem and the Italian National Anthem by Steve Zimmer accompanied by Shirley Giebitz of Exeter. We will have other presentations and ribbon cutting. We will have music by Charlie Stienman and Friends all afternoon. People will be dancing on the parking lot (we wanted to have a street dance, but could not get permission to close the street). We will have several food booths, Spaghetti and Meatballs, Sausage and Pepper sandwiches, salad booth, Italian cookie booth, Foccaccia Fritti Booth (fried Italian dough), beverage booth featuring wine, beer and soft drinks. We will be selling balloons and T-shirts with the Trulli logo. A GREAT BIG THANKS TO J. MICHAEL BOWERS FROM THE CITY STAFF FOR THE ART WORK.

Our festival is the first for Visalia (Italian one- that is) from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

WE INVITE THE PEOPLE OF VISALIA AND SURROUNDING AREAS TO COME AND HAVE A GOOD TIME WITH US.

Another interesting feature of our Trulli, the Mayor and the citizens of Putignano shipped over an authentic drinking fountain from Putignano. It arrived last week from Italy and thanks to Earl Guthrie from Harbor City, who was instrumental in picking it up from

customs for us and to Lawrence Romanazzi and Scotty White for going down to pick the fountain up and bringing it to Visalia. The fountain has been placed in the area in front of the Trulli. It is very authentic and these fountains are found all over Italy. Have a drink!!!

Another humanitarian story is, the City Manager from Putignano, Bruno Bianco, stayed with Pete and Carmeline Giotta when he came in 1980. He told us he had a little daughter who had polio when she was a baby and was very handicapped and wondered if she could be seen by doctors in America. Well--through the efforts of Curley Edgington of the Shriners, she was able to be admitted to the Shriners Childrens Hospital in San Francisco and spent three months there in 1983. She returned in 1985 for back surgery and correction to prolong her life. The efforts of the Putignano Sister City and the Visalia Sons of Italy Lodge were very supportive of this project along with many personal donations and time from many local people especially Pete and Carmeline Giotta and John and Rena Fumia from San Jose.

Special thanks to Ben Owens, Pete Giotta and Joe Coppola, the three who gave the most on the Trulli building.

I can write many more pages on my feelings about this Sister City project, but I am sure you all have come to realize how we feel.

The present Sister City Committee consists of Chairman Ida Romanazzi, Pete Giotta, Louie Giannandrea, Vito A. Giotta, Steve Luisi, Angelo Mirizzi, Mildred Romanazzi, Georgette White, Lawrence A. Romanazzi, Ed Foster,

Lora Hamar, Pauline Wenn, Joe Coppola, Harold Tucker, Pete Peterson and our City Staff Person Ben Owens.

I also wish to thank Honey LaBelle who also served on our committee sometime back.

The City of Putignano has a bar named Bar Visalia. A bar there is similar to our Chilly Billy in Visalia, a walk up, very nice! We sent the owner a plaque thanking him for thinking of us. I understand we will be having some visitors coming from Putignano later this summer and in the fall--Another Party!

All I have left to say is --
**EVERYONE SHOULD VISIT
PUTIGNANO--YOU WILL BE TREATED
ROYALLY!**

4-27-86

Ida Romanazzi, Chairman
Putignano Sister City Committee

Just as a matter of history, I would like to record the names of the Italians who came in 1980 and the students who came in 1984-85 and the students from Visalia who went to Putignano in February 1985.

Coming in 1980:

Mayor Vito and Enza Vinella-stayed with Luke and Goldie Bianco

Enzo and Anna Schettini-stayed with Noel and Dorothy McDermott

Bruno and Gilda Bianco-stayed with Pete and Caremline Giotta

Antangelo and Angela Pulignano-with Cliff and Nina Joiner

Alessandro Leara - with Luke and Goldie Bianco

Sebastiano Impedevo - with John Schaffer

Paulo and Giuseppa Vinella - Larry and Lora Hamar

Serafina DeFano - Scotty and Georgette White

Pietro and Lizetta Campanella - Louie and Italia Giannandrea

Guiseppe and Anna Mirizzi - Frank and Maria Parisi

Angalina and Anna Laterza and Anna Marie Laterza-Carmella Florio

Martino and Filomena Amate-with John and Gina Giotta

Angelo and Maria Guarini - with Lloyd and Vanabeth Trout

Maria Intini - Steve and Sharon Luisi

Saverio and Anna Barletta - with Angelo and Mary Mirizzi

Enzo and Flora Delfine-Matt and Rose Romanazzi

Giovanni and Caelina Pugliese - Louie and Italia Giannandrea

Gian Angelo and Tonina Bianco - with Angelo and Mary Mirizzi

Marco and Rosa Delfine - with Ida and Lawrence Romanazzi

Francesco and Tonina Dalena - relatives in Fresno

Guiseppe and Maria Mirizzi - Angelo and Mary Mirizzi

Andrea and Nicolleta Pagliarulo - John Bianco

Vito and Nicola DeRobertise - relatives in Oakland	Going to Putignano in February 1985:
Pietro and Senora Bianco - with relatives	Derek Moore - with Gaetano Contegiacomo
Students coming over in December 1984 and January 1985:	Kevin Fistolera - Luigi Serio
Gaetano Contegiacomo-Wanda Moore	John Fistolera - Daprile family
Eleonora Elefante and Luigi Serio-with Mike Fistolera family	Colleen Gerard - Mara Vinella
Anna Lisa Ricciardiello with Goldie Bianco	Diane Franey - Alessandra Intini
Gianpietro Daprile with Louie Giannandrea family	Yvonne Bianco-Ricciardeiello family
Francesco Faniolo and Giuseppe Molinterno with Larry and Pauline Wenn	Jill Kinosian-Anna Maria Candela
Donato Giotta with John Giotta Cesare Tinelli and Pietro Lippolis with Vito and Sybil Giotta	Donna Roa-Elefante family
Anna Maria Candela and Anna Rita Basile with Ida and Lawrence Romanazzi and Lora Hamar	Rosemary Manuele - Giotta family
Roberto Bianco - Anna Sbardella family	Suzanne Buldo - Elefante family
Carmine Cerullo - Antoinette Soares family	Brook Purpuro - Anna Rita Basile
Alessandra Intini with Dom Deleonardis family	Jennefer Brown - Mario Tinelle family
Mara Vinella with Glen Gerard family	Adults going in February 1985:
Elizabeta Elefante with Scotty and Georgette White and Lora and Larry Hamar	Pete and Carmeline Giotta Ida Romanazzi Steven Sterns Georgette White Rena and John Fumia Mary Deleonardis
Teacher Dominica Natile with Matt and Rose Romanazzi	Special plaque of appreciation was given to Joe Coppola, Ben Owens and Pete Giotta, thanking them for their dedication and time spent on the Trulli.
Professor Antonio Pellegrino with Pete and Carmeline Giotta	The festival was very successful and everyone really had a good time and thought the Trulli was a beautiful building. We hope to make the building available for viewing on a scheduled basis in the future.

UPDATE -- 1988

We held another festival at the park in 1987. This was very successful. We held another festival at the Park on May 1, 1988. This too was very successful. We had tarantella dancers from the Bay area who put on two shows in the afternoon. We had an accordion player from San Francisco who played during the afternoon and we also had a Western band who really contributed a great deal to the festival.

We are in the process of planning another trip to Italy probably in May of 1989. we will also be planning another festival in 1989. We are keeping the trulli open a couple of hours on Sunday afternoons so that visitors can come and browse around and listen to us talk about Italy. On Thursday, July 28, 1988, four young men came to Visalia who were visiting California. They were from Putignano, Italy. They were Antonio Torisco, Pietro Barletta, Giuseppe Catera and Gaetano Cafagna. There around the age of 25 or so and very nice. We took them out to dinner and then met with several of the Sister City Committee later on. We gave them T-shirts and other items of interest. The next day, Lawrence Romanazzi took them to the Sequoias and they left that evening. They were very pleased the Trulli and our Sister City ideas.

UPDATE 1989--SENATOR PIETRO MENZAPESSA

Weekend of March 11th, we received a call from Bruno Bianco from Italy informing us that Senator Menzapessa from Italy was visiting California and wanted to come to Visalia. We were going to be in

Long Beach that weekend and the Senator was going to be in San Diego, so Jo Cutri from San Diego brought the Senator to Long Beach to meet all of us at a Sons of Italy function. He is the first senator from the Puglia area to serve in that capacity. We had an enjoyable visit with him. He really did not have enough time to come to Visalia, but will try to make it sometime in the future.

April 16, 1986, we held another Sister City Festival at the park where the Trulli is located. We did not serve beer or wine this year. We only served soft drinks. The usual Focaccia fritti, Spaghetti and meatballs, sausage, spomi ice cream, t-shirts and our bocce games. This was a quiet event. We only had accordion music. Our tarantella dancers did not show up.

We had our dinner with the other City Committees in September. Very nice affair at the Convention Center.

We also still meet once a month at the Trulli.

May 1989- A trip to Italy was planned and the last week was spent in Putignano, Italy. The group arrived in Rome and we spent three days there before the tour started. I (Ida Romanazzi) left by train for Putignano and the others started the tour of Italy which included Sicily. They arrived in Putignano and I met them there. They were housed in various homes and the week of dining and dancing and visiting various places started.

While there, Pete, Carmeline Giotta and Ida Romanazzi had dinner with Senator Menzapessa, the gentleman who was here in

March of 1989. Very interesting family in the City of Putignano.

Others going on this trip were John and Rena Fumia who stayed with Bruno and Gilda Bianco, Bruno Giuffrida from San Diego who stayed with Vito and Enza Vinella, Harold and Dallas Fink who stayed with Vinnellas, Harold and Beverly Tucker who stayed with Enzo and Flora Delfine, Ray and Fran Schlick, Dick and Jean Hemmingway stayed with Mrs. Contegiacamo, Pete and Carm stayed at the Hotel Plaza, Ida Romanazzi stayed with her cousin Fausta Morea, Robert and Dorothey Gieger stayed with Dr. Intini family.

In September we had our yearly dinner with other Committees for the City of Visalia.

The Volkswalk was in Visalia in 1989 and they used our trulli as a point of interest. In fact, their medallion for the year 1989 had the trulli on it. They gave us one which is framed and in the Trulli.

April 29, 1990 -- We held another festival at our Park. This was a very lively and successful festival. Mainly because several of our members along with the Sons of Italy members are learning the Tarantella dances. This group is known as the Visalia Tarantella dancers and they performed on that day. We also had the accordion player from San Francisco. We also had the L'Quateria from the Bay Area in Visalia performing. It was very exciting.

We had a medallion of our own made. We received in August 1990 and it has a beautiful picture of the Trulli on it. It also shows the date the Trulli was dedicated.

In August 1990, we had more visitors from Italy. They were not from Putignano but from the Northern part of Italy.

1991--The Sons of Italy Grand Lodge of California-Order Sons of Italy in America held their Council meeting in Visalia--March 8, 1991. National President Albert J. Riccilli, Sr. and First Lady Norma visited the Trulli. They were very impressed since Sons of Italy is getting involved with the Sister City Program. The Sister City Program will becoming a State and National project.

March 24, 1991, many attended the crab feed at Sons of Italy from the Dessert Valley Lodge, Victorville, California. They were very impressed with the Trulli and the Sister City Program.

May 18, 1991 -- Many attended the Sons of Italy dinner dance honoring Pete Giotta. from the Inland Empire lodge, Fontana, California. They too were very impressed *with the Trulli.*

Also attending was couple visiting Toni and Manuel Soares from Italy. They were Michele and Teresal Anniachaireco from Palagamo very near Putignano, Italy.

Our festival this ^{year} will be held in October.

Ida and Lawrence Romanazzi will be attending the international meeting of Sister Cities in Chicago on July 1st through 21st, 1991.

July 11, 1991 to July 20, 1991 -- Lawrence and Ida Romanazzi attended the Sister City International Conference in Chicago. There were several delegates from Italy since they were pushing the celebrations to be held in Italy in 1992 in recognition of Christopher Columbus...particularly in Rome, Genoa and Sorrento.

There are 53 cities in the U.S. that have a sister city in Italy -- 14 of them are from California.

It was a very enjoyable conference where we met people from all over the world. You can't believe the people who attend these conferences. This is a very important way where countries can meet and enjoy what we each do. We really should have more Sister Cities.

A very detailed report was presented to the City of Visalia and one is on file at the Trulli. The Grand Lodge of the Order Sons of Italy in America and the National Lodge of Sons of Italy and the local Sister City Committee sponsored Ida Romanazzi.

October 6, 1991 -- Another festival was held at the Sister City Park. It was very successful and a lot of fun. We had the Trulli open for the public to view all the memorabilia from Putignano, Italy. We enjoyed good food all afternoon and the Visalia dancers did the Tarantella several times during the afternoon. People also enjoyed dancing up to 4 p.m.

May 6, 1992 -- A group went to Italy and toured for 21 days and then spent five days in Putignano. We toured up to Venice and all through Sicily and back to Sorrento and then Putignano. Those going on the trip: Pete and Carmaline Giotta; Lawrence and Ida Romanazzi; Tony and Jackie Maniscalco; Diego,

Josie and Maria Scalia; Joe and Lina Scalia; Basil and Kathy Perch; Tom and June Giotta; Patrick and Sandy Ogle; Mike and Nadine Fistolera; Vinnie Lomonaco; Guido and Frances Lombardi; Vi Coppola; Jo Vitale; Raff DeBellis; Phil and Maureen Bianco; Gil and Bernice Verone; Jesse and Irene Flores. Our host families in Italy were: Martino Amati, Francesco Dalena, Giuseppe Campanella, Francesco Faniuola, Andriana Contegiacomo, Bruno Bianco, Giuseppe Mirizzi, Mario Tinelli, Giuseppe Elefante, Vito Vinella, Antoinetta DeMicolis, Francesco Daprile, Fausta Morea. Our tour guide was Francesco Galluzzi and driver Pasquale Dell Augelli. Returned home May 30, 1992. We flew Alitalia from L.A. to Rome.

We spent the rest of the time to October, 1992, planning our big Columbus Day celebration.

October, 1992 -- A big celebration in Visalia in honor of Columbus Day. This event was sponsored by the Putignano Sister City Committee and the Visalia Sons of Italy Lodge.

Many months of planning went into this affair. We held a parade on Saturday from Willis Street on pass the Trulli on West Main Street. Vito A. Giotta was the Grand Marshall and wife Sybil joined him. The Sons of Italy Grand Lodge Queen and her court were here -- the ship was constructed by a member of the Hanford Lodge.

The festival at the Park started at 1 p.m. and went to 4 p.m. We had all our food booths and entertainment from various organizations in Visalia. We had a bocce tournament.

In the evening starting at 6:30 p.m. we had a banquet and ball at the Sons of

Italy Hall featuring a steak dinner and dancing to Jerry Venturi band.

We had several visitors from Putignano -- Vice-mayor Pietro and Antoinette Sportello hosted by Basil and Kathy Perch; Vito and Enza Vinella; President of the Putignano Sister City Committee in Putignano and hosted by Goldie Bianco; Nella Daffano hosted by Goldie Bianco; Angelino DeMicollis and Francesca DeMicollis hosted by Phil and Maureen Bianco; Maria Togati hosted by Ida and Lawrence Romanazzi; Francesco and Teresa Ventrella hosted by John and Gina Giotta; Cesare and Laura Console hosted by Joe and Lina Scalia; Domenico and Italia Guagnano hosted by Diego and Josie Scalia; Giuseppe Manfreda hosted by Ralph and Rita Prisco; Giovanni Loberfido hosted by Bruno and Anna Sbardalla; Dominico and Angelo LoSavio hosted by Dolores and David DeLong; Francesco and Mima Campanella hosted by Louie and Mildred Romanazzi; Maria Pacella hosted by Georgette White; GianVito Putignano hosted by Pete and Carmaline Giotta; Graziella Giganti and son Rocco by Vinne Lomonaco; Vincenzo and Anna Schettini hosted by Jim and Florence Bair.

We also treated the visitors to the Sequoias, Disneyland and what have you.

We have many people to thank for this wonderful celebration including the City of Visalia who hosted a special dinner for the visitors at the Radisson with Mayor Basil Perch as the host.

December, 1992 -- We held a Christmas Potluck party at the home of Mary and Pete Peterson. Great time for members and spouses.

October 17, 1993 -- We held another Italian Festival at the Sister City Park. We had our usual food booths and Bocce tournaments and viewing of the inside of the Trulli.

December, 1993 -- Another Christmas Potluck party and the home of Mary and Pete Peterson for members and spouses.

June, 1994 -- The Sons of Italy hosted a State Convention in Visalia and the Trulli was one of the places visited by the delegates.

September, 1994 -- Another trip to Italy: Pete and Carmaline Giotta; Barbara and Don Kidd; Lawrence and Ida Romanazzi; Larry and Marlene Romanazzi; and Anthony Romanazzi and Stephanie Kidd. We took a ten day tour of Italy and then spent two weeks in Putignano. The Lawrence and Ida Romanazzi celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary there. The Sister City of Putignano were very hospitable and again we had a good time going here and there. We returned home on October 2, 1994.

October 16, 1994 -- Another Festival at the Park on Main Street. We had the usual food booths, entertainment and had a good time.

December, 1994 -- Another Christmas Potluck party at the home of Lawrence and Ida Romanazzi with members and spouses.

May 10, 1995 -- Another trip to Italy -- 21 days included northern Italy and Sicily. After the tour all but six people went to Putignano. Three couples remained in Sicily with family. Going on this trip: Pete and Carmaline Giotta; Ida Romanazzi; Nina Joiner; Josephine Rapcenko; Tony and Angela Zambito;

Frank and Nina Scalia; Andy and Stella Vaccaro; Americo and Irene Papaleo; Jim and Elsie Imperatrice; Ed and Nina Ling; Dan and Gail Certini; Diane Certini; Rose Mary Certini; John and Gayle Certini; Shannon and Carmela Copeland; Joe and Rosalie LoBue; Kathleen Broderick; Julie McGoldrick; Joe and Eileen Coppola; Toni and Millie Boyer; Monroe and Mrs. Phillips. Several families hosted various couples but most of them stayed at the Hotel Plaza. Of course all who went to Putignano said this was the topping on the cake -- the best part of the trip. We returned home on June 1, 1995.

October 15, 1995 -- Another Italian Festival. This year we held the festival at the Sons of Italy Park on West Goshen Avenue. This eliminated taking all the pots, pans and what have you to the Main Street location. This worked fairly well with things so handy.

December, 1995 -- Had another Christmas Potluck party at the Lawrence and Ida Romanazzi home.

April, 1996 -- John Bianco and Danny Certini joined the Sister City Committee.

June 8, 1996 -- Another tour of Italy. This one going up to the Swiss border. Very nice trip...beautiful weather all the way. Going on this trip were people from all over California: Lawrence and Ida Romanazzi; Lynn, Donna, Joshua and Phillip Grist; Pauline Richmond; Marie Merenco; Joseph and Betty Manuele; Pearl Billeci and Janeta Capello; Angie Rizzo and Barbara Firsick; Frank and Helen Brogno; Carol and Terry Watson; Raff DeBellis and Betty Boggs; John and Yolanda Mizera; Josephine Vassallo; Rosemary Lotz; Maurey and Florence Turek; George Marostica; Arturo Ibleto; Shannon Orisio; Anica Dutto; Larry and Kathy

Dutto; Angela Biscotti; Lois Evangelisti; Gregory and Shirley Malta; Frances Servante and Betty Barton.

The Romanazzi family and Grist family went to Portovenere for three days and then on to Putignano for 10 days. Watsons and Pauline Richmond also visited Putignano. Everyone who goes to Putignano really gets the royal treatment and are anxious to return.

August, 1996 -- John Romanazzi was here from Putignano, Italy. He is related to the Louie Giannandrea family. We also have visitors from the Lake Como area of Northern Italy -- Lisa Cavallini who was an exchange student here in 1960. She came with her son and three other people. We had a party for them at the Sons of Italy Hall and this included our visitor from Putignano.

October 20, 1996 -- We had another Italian Festival at the Sons of Italy Park. We had more participation this time and we had the same food booths and some good entertainment and dancing.

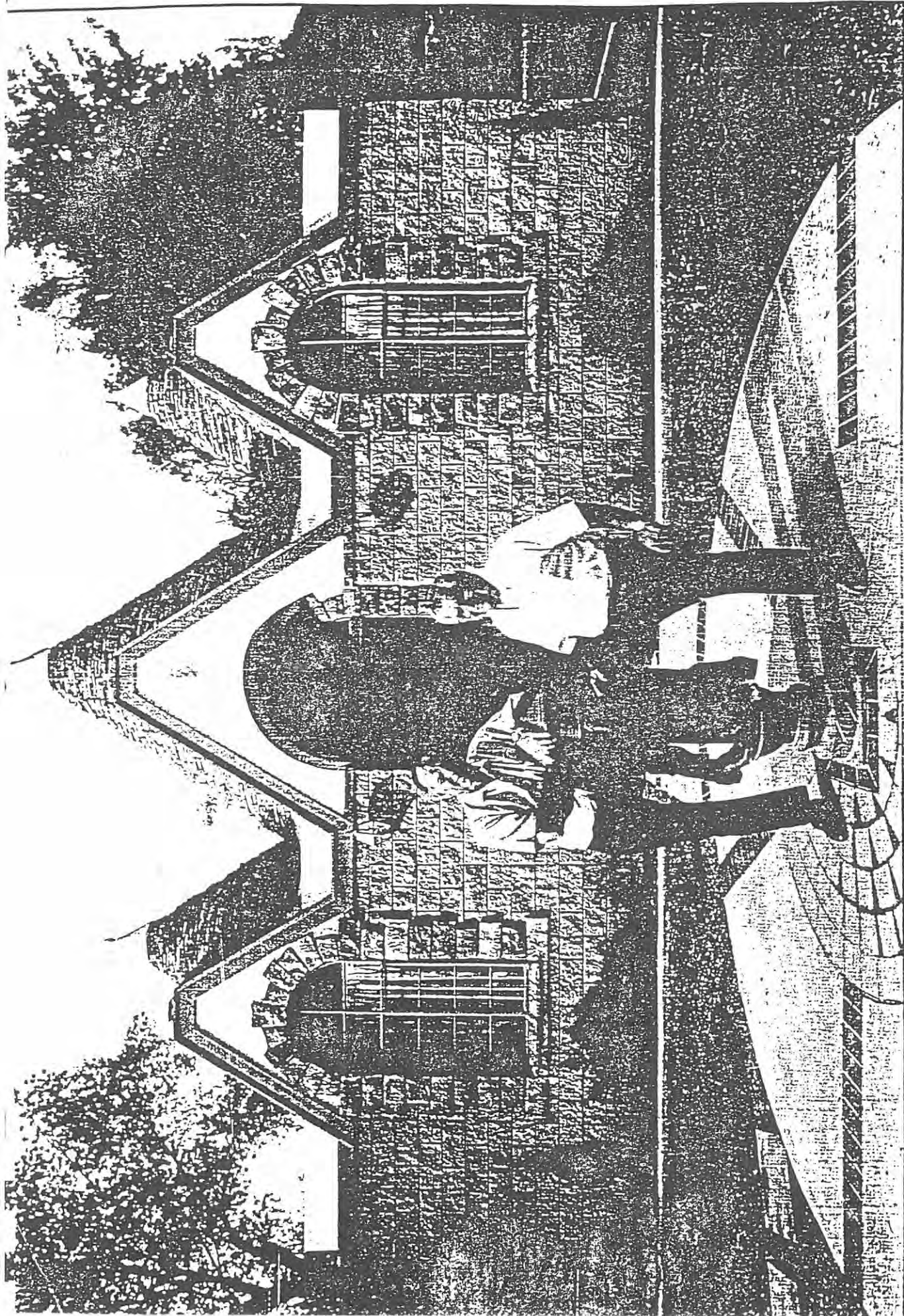
December, 1996 -- Another Christmas Potluck party at the Romanazzi house. After Christmas, we had Mario and Pina Leara from Putignano, Italy, visit us. They were hosted by Pete and Carmaline Giotta. They enjoyed the New Year's Eve Celebration with us at the Sons of Italy Hall. We took them to Disneyland, Medieval Times, Universal Studios, Las Vegas and San Francisco. Mario is a paternal cousin of the Giotta family. They returned home January 15, 1997.

May 9, 1997 -- Another group joined in a tour of Italy again. Our tour leaders were Pete Giotta and Danny Certini. They did the 14 day tour taking them up to the Swiss border and down to Sorrento. The following people went:

Bette Plummer; Lorraine Bosard; Don Joseph; Wanda Kocher; Vivian Price; Ed and Dorothy Metzger; Jan McGlamery; Anna Dugan and Lucille Lorenzo; and Michael Howe. Also going on the trip but extending time to visit Putignano, our Sister City: Pete and Carmaline Giotta; Dan and Gaile Certini; Richard and Terry Curtiss; Barbara and Stacy Kidd; Mayor Louise Vivier; Judy Evans; Dolores DeLong; Peter and Gwen Krahn; Vernon and Lucille Keener; Vicki Setzer; Curtis and Erlinda Blakely; Dr. Douglas Gilio and Nishan Gilio. Most of the people stayed at Hotel Plaza and some were hosted by the people of Putignano.

June, 1997 -- We had more visitors from Putignano: Mario and Rosa Tinelli hosted by Louie and Italian Giannandrea; Martine and Mimi Amante hosted by Gina and John Giotta. The Sister City Committee gave them all t-shirts and Mr. Amante a 4' x 6' American flag so they can display it at their meetings and festivals in Putignano. Both the Tinellis and Amantes are members of the Putignano Sister City Committee in Putignano.

Our 1997 Italian Festival will be held on Sunday, October 19, 1997, at the Sons of Italy Park.



Italians - An active Italian community has enhanced the Sister City ties between Visalia and Putignano, Italy. As a tribute to this relationship, many local Italians helped construct a traditional Italian Trully building in a local park.

