



Short Ears, Long Tales

Courte Oreilles Lakes Association

Issue #12 July 1, 2016

[View this email in browser](#)

COLA PICNIC

Saturday July 16, 2016
Noon - 3:00 pm
Bass Lake Town Hall

4TH ANNUAL COLA CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT

Sponsored by: Lac Courte Oreilles Foundation and Courte Oreilles Lakes Association

September 17, 2016
More details to follow

IN THE NEWS

[COLA and LCO Tribe ask Judge to Review DNR Denial on Phosphorus](#)

Sawyer County Record
June 22, 2016

RECENT PRESS RELEASES

[Lake Association and LCO Tribe Proceed with Legal Action to Protect Lac Courte Oreilles](#)

HELP NEEDED

[Join the COLA Board!](#)

COLA's Treasurer, Steve Lillyblad, will be retiring soon. Are you willing to help out? Requirements: Basic computer skills, some familiarity with spreadsheet software, and a commitment to the well-being of LCO.

COLA is also recruiting two other board positions, one focusing on forestry practices and the other on watershed outreach.

Send inquires to [COLA](#).

SPREAD THE GOOD NEWS

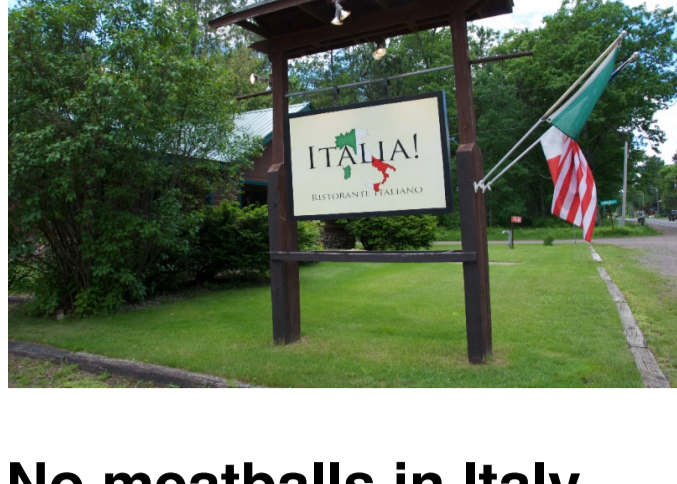
We'd like to spread the news of COLA's good people and good works throughout the upper Couderay River watershed. If you have friends or family on nearby lakes who would enjoy Short Ears Long Tales, [let us know](#).

Help COLA by sharing this newsletter with friends.

Support COLA by contributing to the [Lac Courte Oreilles Foundation](#).

Are your neighbors and extended family members of COLA? If not, please ask them to [join](#).

ARCHIVED ISSUES OF SHORT EARS, LONG TALES



No meatballs in Italy

By Kathy Hanson
Contributing Writer

I recall my mother-in-law Violet Hanson talking about the good old days when she and her husband Marvin used to go out on the town on Saturday nights, "down the boulevard" on Northwoods Beach.

The boulevard had any number of supper clubs that lined the road, but one of their favorites was the Milwaukee Inn, located on Highway K.

The Milwaukee Inn is gone, as are the handful of restaurants that followed in the 1950s through the years leading up to 2014, when Italia! Ristorante Italiano made its debut. Now, people who live on Lac Courte Oreilles have another dining option close by and it's authentic Italian cuisine.

Lisa and Rick Pajac, who met in Ashland, Wisconsin, lived in Italy for many years while Rick was in the Air Force. His first air base was Aviano Air Base in northeastern Italy in 1984 where they learned to cook Italian food.

Lisa worked in hospitality-related jobs as they moved around from Italy to California, Germany, Portugal and then North Dakota, where Rick retired from the Air Force.



Lisa Pajac greeting diners at Italia! Ristorante Italiano. Photo by Tom Burgess.

Lisa's work included many positions in Air Force Clubs where she started as a bartender in Italy and progressed to bar manager, restaurant manager and assistant club manager. When Rick retired she was selected to be the Club Manager at Sembach AB in Germany and from there went on to manage clubs in Colorado Springs and Columbus, Mississippi. In 2011 she accepted a job with the US Navy in Naples, Italy where she learned Southern Italian cooking.

When one hears the saying, "Hospitality knows no boundaries," Lisa has lived it.

When Lisa and Rick purchased Italia it was in foreclosure. They made their offer to the bank in November 2013 and it was accepted. They were living in Naples, Italy and moved here in June 2014.

The building had been vacant for one and one-half years, Lisa said, as she listed the issues they had to face: burst pipes, problems in the upstairs apartment, leaky roof, bad flooring, a walk-in freezer that had to be converted to a cooler, and more. They had to buy new equipment, insulate the 1929 dining room, replace the well pump, two furnaces, wiring and later the septic system.

Today it is restored to a sheen and patina, standing proud, and Italia is a family operated business.



Meticulously restored interior of Italia! Ristorante Italiano. Photos by Kathy Hanson.

Lisa is owner/operator/hostess; Rick hosts, buses tables and "fixes things;" daughter Jovanna is the sous chef and the artist who designed the signage; son-in-law Mike does electric work and cooks on the line with their son Brandon, who is the chef; daughter Shanna is the bartender and her husband Russ is the IT guy.

There are also employees who are considered "family." Adrienne is the expeditor of food from the kitchen and the dishwasher; Cory preps, works the line and creates specials; Heather and Hazel are the servers who have been with them from the start. "All are team players," Lisa said.

And what comes out of the kitchen has already earned them the "Certificate of Excellence" from TripAdvisor and "Best New Business of 2015" by the Hayward Area Chamber of Commerce. They have 2,335 Facebook followers.

Lisa said, "We use the freshest and finest ingredients, many imported from Italy, to create authentic Italian cuisine. We make our products from scratch and use local sources for many of the items on our menu. We purchase our 18-year-old balsamic vinegar, our steaks, fresh fish and coffee from local businesses. "Our tables are named after cities in Italy and each table features a guidebook for that city and a pitcher purchased in that city."

The entree menu includes Pollo Piccata, Spaghetti Bolognese, Penne Arrabiatta, Linguine Carbonara, Pollo Marsala, all made to order and all are dinner items they've had in the family for the last 30 years.

Except on the children's menu, you won't see a meatball in this restaurant. "I never saw a meatball in Italy," Lisa said.

Pizzas are made Napolitani style—thin crust with authentic toppings. Homemade desserts include tiramisu, panna cotta and drunken chocolate cake.

Lunches include sandwiches, salads and pizza, with outdoor patio/deck dining as an option.

And the vino? It's all Italian save for one wine. The house wine is a Montepulciano, the most popular red grape from Italy.

Picnic baskets for two are offered, featuring appetizers, entrees and bread. Lasagna is available as take and bake or takeout, small or large pans; pizza takeout is also available.

"This is family dining—fine, casual Italian dining," said Lisa.

Buon Appetito!

PLEASE HELP COLA!!

We need people on the Board of Directors. There are a number of projects that are funded, but we can't do them because we don't have the people to oversee them.

JOIN THE COLA BOARD!!

Kathy Hanson is a free-lance reporter for the Sawyer County Gazette, the Sawyer County Field Editor for Our Wisconsin magazine, and Copy Editor for the Bayfield County Journal. She has also served as Staff Reporter, Business Feature Writer, Columnist, and Copy Editor for the Sawyer County Record.

The eNewsletter Editor can be reached at:

COLA
P.O. Box 702
Hayward, WI 54843
courte.oreilles.lakes.association@gmail.com