



Italian American Heritage Club Of Hunterdon County

KEEPING OUR *Pride*, CELEBRATING OUR *Culture*, REMEMBERING OUR *Past*

Program Notes for June: Bob Marino, Singer, Entertainer

Bob Marino and his family have been residents in Warren, NJ for nineteen years. Bob started singing in the late 1990s, when his new next door neighbor at that time, Eddy Fischgrund, brought him to a local musical theatre group in Union, NJ where he auditioned and sang publicly for the first time in his life. That was the start of his singing career and he has been performing ever since. Bob appeared in four plays with the Union Players, including, “Little Abner”, “Bye, Bye Birdie”, “Thoroughly Modern Mille”, and “Diamonds” which was a combination of “How to Marry a Millionaire” and “Take Me Out to the Ball Game”.

In 1995, Bob started a theatre group called *The Memory Lane Players*, in Warren, NJ. He wrote one original musical every year for four years which the group performed to benefit the Watchung Hills Regional High School Scholarship Fund. The first play was “A 50s Story – A Jukebox Full of Fun”. Other plays included: “Catskill Cabaret”, “Somewhere Over the Verrazano”, and “A 60s Summer in Coney Island”. All of the musicals were packed with hits from the 40s through the 70s. The group had a cast of over twenty members plus a seven person band. Needless to say, this took up much time and Bob was in search of something that required less hours.

Around the year 2000, Bob’s mother and father moved into Watchung Ridge Assisted Living in Watchung, NJ and Bob began volunteering and doing shows at the new place. Bob enjoyed seeing the smiles on the faces of his parents as well as the other residents as he sang the old tunes and they strolled down memory lane together.

More recently, Bob has been doing shows ranging from senior communities, town and business events to the Borgata in Atlantic City which was by far the biggest stage and audience this boy has ever experienced. May 4th, on his parents anniversary, Bob volunteered and performed at the Berkeley Plaza to benefit Autism.

He also performed for another benefit in March at the Stonecrest Church in Warren, NJ at which time he met our very own Agnes Baccaro, and she quickly introduced Bob to the Italian American Heritage Club of Hunterdon County.

Bob enjoys performing songs from the 40s, 50s, 60s, and 70s and he especially loves the Italian pop songs from those years. Bob’s mother’s roots go back to Naples and his father’s side goes back to Sicily. Growing up, he would always love to hear the Neopolitan love songs. Artists like Jerry Vale, Dean Martin, Connie Francis, Al Martino, Jimmy Roselli and Frank Sinatra name a few were his inspiration. A few of his favorite tunes are: Al di la, Mala Femmena, Came Prima, Non Dimenticar and the list goes on. “They just don’t make love songs like that anymore.”

While singing has evolve into a second career for Bob, his family has always been in the fish business. It started with Bob’s grandfather and grandmother selling fish from a horse-drawn wagon in Brooklyn, NY. His parents followed the tradition and owned and operated The Hillside Seafood House in Hillside, NJ for many years. Today, Bob’s primary business is selling seafood. He owns a company called Marino Marketing, Inc. specializing in the national sales and marketing of seafood produced around the world. In 2000, Bob co-authored a book called **Bob & Joe’s Smart Seafood Guide**. So, when Bob’s not selling or cooking seafood, you can usually find him crooning an old tune from yester-year.

Bob says, “I feel like I’m blessed to be able to perform shows to make people happy. It just goes to show you, you never know what you could be doing next in life.... If you live long enough, anything could happen.”