



COOKING WITH LOVE: FROM SICILY TO HOUSTON'S EAST END

BY JENA MORENA

For 22 years, Grace Mandola, drove every day to Tony Mandola's Blue Oyster Bar in southeast Houston.

Last month, she left her Broadmoor home one more morning and headed to her son's restaurant on the Gulf Freeway to say goodbye to her longtime customers. To those diners who didn't know the restaurant had closed, Mandola, 88, was there to say "Thank you" one last time for their patronage.

After more than two decades of greeting customers as the restaurant's hostess, cashier, and all around backbone of the business, Mandola isn't quite ready to retire just yet.

"I'm trying to find a job," Mandola half-joked, as she sat in her antique-filled home, surrounded by generations of Mandola and Carrabba family members.

As matriarch of some of the most famous Houston-born restaurateurs, she has long been dedicated to the local restaurant scene.

"We love to eat," she said, explaining the family's passion for cooking.

Born in Alexandria, Louisiana to immigrant parents from Cefalu, which is in northern Sicily, Mandola later moved to Houston. Her family settled in the East End, where her father, Joe Testa, started a jewelry business.

In their new home, the family felt welcomed by many neighbors who also hailed from the 'old country.'

In the early years of the 20th century, "a lot of Italians lived in this area," she remembered.

It was in the East End where she met her future husband, Tony Mandola after he picked her up from work one day. Both Grace and her sister were infatuated

continued on pg. 2



Broadmoor resident Grace Mandola with grandson Johnny Carraba and daughter and son-in-law, Rose and Johnny Carraba

Eastwood Civic Association Meeting • September 13, 2004 • 7:30 - 8:30 pm • Cape Center
DEED RESTRICTIONS, CITY PLANNING, AND NEIGHBORHOOD PROTECTION, GUEST SPEAKER, MARY VARGO

MARTIN CHAVEZ HONORED

When was the last time you noticed graffiti in the Eastwood area? Due to the tireless efforts and professional approach of Martin Chavez, Constituent Services Manager for the Greater East End District and their Graffiti Abatement Program, it has virtually disappeared from our area. They not only cover the graffiti quickly, but match the paint color.

KHWHB 39 News presented Martin with the 2004 Hispanic Heritage Unsung Hero Award for his work with the Greater East End District and his volunteer work with Gano Carecen and Campo Del Sol. Houston City Council recongnized him for his volunteer work and service to the East End community on August 24th.

Eastwood adds its congratulations for these well-deserved honors!

If you notice graffiti, contact the Greater East End District at 713.928.9916 or let our association know at 713.923.3983 or eastwood@eastwood-houston.com ☑

DIRECTIONS & CONNECTIONS

The City is hosting a city-wide conference for neighborhood leaders. This conference entitled, Directions & Connections: Charting a Path for Your Neighborhood, will be held Saturday, September 11, 2004, at the George R. Brown Convention Center.

This free conference is geared toward community-based organizations and individuals interested in improving their neighborhoods. It provides training, resources and solutions through a combination of workshops, presentations, and networking opportunities.

ECA President Steve Parker (*W. A. Kirby*) and this month's guest speaker and Southeast Neighborhood Coalition President, Mary Vargo attended the five-week Neighborhood Leadership Institute last fall, which offered many of these sessions. Both agree that is was one of the most valuable sources of information for anyone interested in helping their neighborhood, from the occasional volun-

continued on pg. 2

COOKING WITH LOVE

cont. from pg. 1

with the young man, but it was Grace who wooed him.

"Your papa was a good looking, man," Mandola teased her children and grandchildren about her husband "and I got the burden."

She and Anthony Mandola married and had five children: Margaret Ann, Rose, Vincent, Tony and Damian.

After living on Milby Street in Broadmoor and Merry Lane in Idylwood, the family moved their brood to a modest brick home in the Broadmoor neighborhood.

For years, Anthony Mandola made his living running businesses in Houston, such as meatpacking and slaughter-houses.

Eventually, the family's home was filled with children and grandchildren who ate dishes Grace Mandola was taught to cook by her mother and mother-in-law, who was also from Italy.

"Our grandmother is the best chef," said her grandson, Johnny Carrabba. "She used to prepare big Sunday meals. Big Italian meals."

Her sons went on to launch some of Houston's most popular Italian and seafood eateries, such as Damian's Cucina Italiana, Nino's and Tony Mandola's Gulf Coast Kitchen.

"When her three boys decided to get into the Italian restaurant business, she helped," said Carrabba. "They were her recipes."

Her daughter, Rose, married Johnny Carrabba, now 67, who took over his father's Carrabbas Friendly Grocery Store on Canal Street.

The couple raised Johnny and Mary Louise, who both observed how their parents treated their customers.

"I learned a lot from my parents," recalls Johnny Carrabba, now 45. "You learn how to call people by their names."

At the grocery store, longshoremen and other customers could eat a lunch of fried fish, roast beef, and hot dogs during their 30-minute breaks, recalls Rose Carrabba.

"It was a nice little living for us," she said.

Back then, the Carrabbas like other grocers, offered their customers credit. Customers cashed their checks every Friday and then paid their grocery bill.

"That was before all the big grocery stores came in," said Rose Carrabba, now 66. "That really started hurting all the little guys."

In 1988, the couple retired from the grocery business and six months later, Rose Carrabba went to work at her son's restaurant, Carrabba's Italian Grill on South Voss Road.

At the age of 27, Johnny Carrabba and his uncle Damian Mandola had decided to launch Carrabba's.

"Damian and I had to go to 12 banks to get the money to open the first Carrabbas," remembers Johnny Carrabba.

He credits his grandmother for teaching him about the art of food.

"You really learn through osmosis," he said. "I'm not a chef. Just by tasting her food, you kind of know what tastes good, what looks good."

His father also helped by preparing the tomato sauce.

"It's a family affair," said the younger Johnny Carrabba. Twelve years ago, the family lost their patriarch when Anthony Mandola passed away.

However, Grace Mandola continues to live in her Broadmoor home as she has for 50 years.

"I like this side of town," said Grace Mandola.

"She's very independent," added Carrabba, co-founder of Carrabba's Italian Grill.

Years ago, Mandola's eldest daughter, Margaret Ann, and her husband moved to their new home off of Dairy Ashford.

"She cried all the way," Johnny Carrabba remembers about his grandmother.

"Grandpa said, 'If I had known it was this far I would have packed a lunch,'" he said, laughing at the memory. ☐

DIRECTIONS & CONNECTIONS

cont. from pg. 1

teer to committee and organization leaders. If you see a session topic that is important to you, attend it! While several are geared to civic groups, many topics apply to organizations that could include charities, school or church clubs, boy scout troupes, even a garden club!

The conference is divided into three 1 1/4 hour sessions. There are three seminars to choose from in each of the sessions. Even though it is best to attend all three sessions, if you only have time for one, it will be well worth it.

Registration is 8:00 - 8:30 a.m., followed by the opening session. Lunch is provided from noon to 1:00 p.m. The seminars are:

SESSON 1: 9:15 - 10:30 _____

Building Blocks for Your Neighborhood Organization: 5 basic building blocks and 7 steps to achieve positive change. Creative ideas and list of resources.

Creating Deed Restrictions that Work for Your Community: creating and reinstating deed restrictions (for those without current deed restrictions)

Bridging the Cultural Divide—Getting to Know Your Neighbors: encourage dialogue and respect, learn helpful techniques to build an inclusive and representative neighborhood.

Show Me the Money: fundraising planning and budgets, sources and types of funding.

Win-Win Works: promote successful conflict solutions with neighbors, civic leaders, city staff, politicians, and others.

The Role of a Neighborhood Leader: important steps in organizing for community action, networking, coordinating membership and projects, and assembling resources.

SESSON 2: 10:45 - NOON _____

Grant Writing: Clarify criteria, establishing a team and learning components of a grant proposal.

Do You Really Want to Create a Non-Profit Organization?: is a 501(c)(3) the best funding option?

Recruiting, Retaining, & Rewarding Volunteers: learn strategies to create meaningful opportunities, the right people for the right job, and keeping them interested and engaged.

Partnerships & Collaborations: what they are, how to form them and what results to expect.

Protecting the Character of Your Neighborhood: how to

HOMES FOR SALE

Have friends or relatives you want to join you in a great neighborhood setting? Here is a partial list of homes, by subdivision, listed for sale at press time. (*new on list)

Bell Place East 606 Altic*	Dor Ruth Court 5008 Park	Eastwood Oaks 5006 Curtin
Broadmoor 1407 Elliott	East Lawn 5030 Lindsay*	Houston City St RR 4116 Rusk
1449 Lawson	5011 Stimson*	Lawndale 5206 Claremont
1450 Lawson	East Lawn 5134 Bell	5310 Claremont
1510 Lawson*	Eastwood 4405 Bell*	5221 Lindsay
1561 Lombardy	4329 Harby*	5106 Mulford
1851 Lombardy*	4531 McKinney	W. A. Kirby 1306 Elliston*
1524 Telephone	4622 Polk*	Woodleigh 4109 Dallas
1528 Telephone	4406 Rusk	4209 Woodleigh
Dissen Heights 5344 Clay		
5120 Leeland		

The Eastwood Voice is a monthly publication of the Eastwood Civic Association. If you have story ideas or comments, or would like to help pass out copies to your neighbors, please contact us at PO Box 9542, Houston, TX 77023 or at eastwood.voice@eastwood-houston.com.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN ADVERTISING OR UNDERWRITING AN ISSUE OF THE EASTWOOD VOICE, PLEASE SEND AN EMAIL TO EASTWOOD@EASTWOOD-HOUSTON.COM OR CALL 713.923.3983.

DIRECTIONS & CONNECTIONS

cont. from pg. 2

preserve a neighborhood through proactive approaches and tools, led by several successful communities.

Creative Problem Solving for Neighborhood Issues: a creative, interactive session, and brainstorming solutions to issues; learn innovative ways to address challenges.

SESSION 3: 1:15 - 2:30

How to Create a Successful Fundraising Event: how to conduct a realistic cost-benefit analysis and planning process.

Developing & Managing Projects: steps for developing and managing an idea. Focusing on preliminary stages of planning, questions to answer. Provides proven methods of tracking the progress.

Moving Super Neighborhoods Forward—Approaches to Neighborhood Challenges: developing innovative projects, how to work with government officials and other important resources.

The Art of Leading Meetings: Some nifty techniques to handle touchy subjects, keep order and move through an agenda. More than Robert's Rules of Order.

The Job's Not Finished 'til the Paperwork's Done! the business side is not glamorous, but needs attention. Basics about records, finances and risk management.

So, You Have Deed Restrictions. Is Your Neighborhood REALLY Protected?: how to ensure they address development trends, protect from incompatible development and tools to preserve quality of life. For neighborhoods with deed restrictions.

If you haven't already signed up, call 713.837.7500 or email conference@cityofhouston.net.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Houston Police Dispatch (non-emergency)	713.884.3131
HPD South Central Substation	713.651.8100
HPD Navigation Storefront	713.238.2282
Harris Co. Constable, Prec. 6	713.923.9156
Constable Polk St. Storefront	713.921.0236
US Congressman Gene Green	713.330.0761
Texas State Senator Mario Gallegos	713.928.7575
Texas State Representative Rick Noriega	713.649.6563
City Councilwoman Carol Alvarado	713.247.2011
Graffiti Abatement	713.928.9916
Union Pacific RR National Police to report parked trains blocking streets	888.877.7267
City of Houston Service Helpline	311

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

NEIGHBORHOOD QUALITY OF LIFE

Mayor White appointed John Walsh as Deputy Chief of Staff for Housing and Neighborhoods to coordinate programs and projects that focus on development, protection and maintenance of healthy neighborhoods, and quality housing. He will speak to Blueprint Houston at 6:00 p.m., September 29th. Call 713.522.0590 to RSVP.

EL CENTRO DE CORAZON - EASTWOOD

Ms. Diane Pavey from St. Luke's Episcopal Health Charities will be at our September meeting to announce a celebration of the new Eastwood site El Centro de Corazon on September 21. The Mayor and numerous city and state dignitaries will be there. Details will be posted on our website: www.eastwood-houston.com

HPD SOUTH CENTRAL

The annual officer appreciation dinner was held during the August PIP meeting. Thanks to the ECA members who attended and brought dishes for the dinner. They were also pleased to announce the ground breaking for the new South Central police station which occurred in August.

SUPERNEIGHBORHOOD

Representatives from the City of Houston Bikeways Program and Harris County Flood Control (HCFC) were present to discuss the planning for the replacement bridges for Forest Hill Street and Lawndale. The HCFC will provide standard street and bridge lighting. They will also be providing a shelf which the Bikeways program to build new bike paths once the bayou has been widened. An architect has been hired to help design the guardrail systems for the bridges. They will return with several alternatives to be discussed and decided on by the SuperNeighborhood.

Council Member Carol Alvarado is working with the Mason Park project and announced a \$10,000 donation by Oak Farms. Additional funding is being sought for a gazebo and benches, a fundraiser is scheduled for October. This is all part of a 20-year plan for Buffalo Bayou.

CALENDAR

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
5	6 LABOR DAY	7	SEPTEMBER 8	9	10 Area A Trash set out	11 Directions/Connections Neighborhood Leader Training 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
12 Monday, 9/13- 10 am Sylvia Garcia, Pct. 2 "Swing Thing" Golf Tournament	13 Heavy Trash Area A 7:00 ECA Board Mtg. 7:30 Civic Club Mtg. Cape Center	14 H-GAC 2006-2008 Trans. Impr. Program 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. 6:30 SuperNeighborhd	15	16	17	18 Greater Zion Missionary Baptist Church HIV Awarness Rally & Voter Regist. 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.
19	20	21 7:00 South Central PIP Meeting	22	23	24 Area B Trash set out	25
26	27	28	29	30	OCTOBER 1 Heavy Trash Area B	2 Eastwood Neighbor- hood Cleanup 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
3	4 7:00 ECA Board Mtg. 7:30 Civic Club Mtg. Cape Center	5	6	7	8 Area A Trash set out	9 Church of the Redeemer "Pet Rally" 3 - 7 p.m. @ 200 Telephone Rd.
10	11 Heavy Trash Area A	12 6:30 SuperNeighborhd	13	14	15	16 Eastwood Historic Home Tour 9/16-17 Noon. - 5:00 p.m.

Heavy Trash Area A: Second Monday, West of Lockwood (toward Cullen) and South of Telephone (toward I-45)
Heavy Trash Area B: First Friday, East of Lockwood (toward Wayside) and North of Telephone (toward Polk)



EASTWOOD CIVIC ASSOCIATION



PO Box 9542 • Houston • Texas • 77261

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

(Please complete and mail to the address above or hand in at the meeting.)

Name: _____

(Please list each household member on this membership, including children.) _____

Address: _____

Telephone(s): _____

Email: _____

Please indicate up to three committees in which you would like to participate:

Block Captain Membership Graffiti Abatement Park Improvements Animal Control

Deed Restrictions Historical Commission OTHER _____

Annual Membership Dues \$25.00 I'm not a member, but please add me to your contact list.

Our monthly newsletter, the Eastwood Voice is available at the monthly meetings and door-to-door in areas with active block captains. If you would like to have a copy mailed to you please include \$3.70 for postage. (You don't have to be a member to receive the newsletter by mail.)

Circle your subdivision

EASTWOOD ■ BROADMOOR ■ LAWNSDALE ■ W. A. KIRBY ■ JACKSON COURT ■ WOODLEIGH ■ EASTLAWN ■
DISSSEN HEIGHTS ■ HOUSTON CITY RAILROAD ■ SUBURBAN ■ L.B. MOODY ■ BEVERLY PARK ■ EASTVIEW ■
HAYSER ■ DOR RUTH ■ MIVELLER ■ DIXIE ■ GEORGIA