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**For Immediate Release**

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**Hoboken Museum Hosts Italian-American Storytellers,  
Holiday Events in November – December**

*Laura Fabiano tells family stories from early 1900s Little Italy in “docu-novel”  
Elizabeth Street; Marie Totaro Evokes “Downtown Hoboken” in new chapbook*

**Hoboken, N.J.** – November 5, 2009 – The Hoboken Historical Museum rounds out the year with a Hoboken author’s new book on life in New York’s Little Italy, the launch of Marie Totaro’s new oral history chapbook, and several holiday-themed events.

**Nov. 11: Local Author Laura Fabiano Shares Hair-Raising Family Stories**

In 1909, Laurie Fabiano’s then-four-year-old grandmother, Angelina, was kidnapped and held for ransom by The Black Hand, a precursor to the Mafia. Probing into a dark family secret that no one discussed, even after nearly a hundred years, Fabiano interviewed her elder family members and researched newspapers from the era to piece together a seldom-told tale of what life in the Little Italy neighborhood was really like for these Italian immigrants from a small Calabrian fishing village across the sea from Sicily. Working nights and weekends for the past 12 years, Fabiano has just published *Elizabeth Street: A Novel Based on True Events*.

The Museum will host a reading and book-signing by the Hoboken-based author, on **Wed., Nov. 11 at 7:30 p.m., at the Museum, 1301 Hudson St.** The event is free, and copies of the book will be available for purchase.

The Black Hand was a constant source of extortion and violence in the community, defying the romanticized depictions of the Mafia. To escape the oppression, the family eventually relocated to the Ironbound section of Newark, N.J., (although in the book, the family moves to Hoboken). The author was born and raised in Cedar Grove. She moved to Hoboken 30 years ago, where her father’s family’s roots were. In addition to a career in marketing and event planning for nonprofit organizations, Fabiano founded the Hoboken Cultural Council, which produced a three month series of events and a two-

day waterfront arts and cultural festival in 1982. From 1985 to 1988, she worked for Mayor Tom Vezzetti at City Hall.

**Nov. 15: Marie Totaro's "Downtown Hoboken" in Oral History Chapbook**

Marie Totaro, legendary Hoboken baker and past chairwoman of the Feast of St. Ann, offers a rich portrait of a way of life that has almost entirely disappeared from her old neighborhood in a new chapbook, *We Were Downtown, Recollections of Marie Totaro*.

On **Sunday, Nov. 15, at 4 p.m.**, the Museum and the Friends of the Hoboken Public Library will celebrate the release of this booklet at the Hoboken Historical Museum. It's the latest publication in the Hoboken Oral History Project, edited by Holly Metz and designed by Ann Marie Manca, who have shaped Marie's stories, as told with humor and an eye toward detail to volunteer interviewer Pat Samperi. *We Were Downtown* was printed with support from John Wiley & Sons.

Anyone who lived in "downtown" Hoboken, has fond memories of Marie's fabulous cheesecakes at Le Jardin, or has been to St. Ann's Feast should stop by the Museum to share their own stories. The event is free and copies of the chapbook will be distributed to all who attend. Refreshments will be served.

**Dec. 6: Holiday Family Concert at the Museum**

In what has become a beloved Hoboken tradition, Dave Lambert and Howard Olah-Reiken will return to the Museum on **Sunday afternoon, Dec. 6, at 3 p.m.**, for a festive, family-friendly concert of holiday and winter-themed music. The singers encourage the audience to sing along and employ various rhythm and noise-making instruments (think jingle bells) to crank up the holiday spirit. All ages welcome. Admission: \$5 per family.

**Dec. 15: Christmas Caroling with St. Dominic's Women's Choir**

The Museum will welcome a group of Christmas carolers from the St. Dominic Academy Women's Choir on **Tuesday evening, Dec. 15, from 7 – 9 p.m.** (*Rain date: Dec. 16*)

The group will set off on a winding path from the Museum's entrance to spread holiday cheer throughout the neighborhood, from Hudson St. to Willow Ave., between 11<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> streets, stopping to sing a carol or two along the way. Anyone who knows the traditional carols is invited to join in the singing. The event is free, but the choir appreciates offers of cookies and hot beverages along the way.

The St. Dominic Academy Women's Choir was formed in 2001; most of its members were part of the academy's award-winning choir during their high school years. The group has performed at Carnegie Hall, and has recorded a CD of Christmas music, which will be available for sale in the Museum for \$15 each. Call the Museum, 201-656-2240, for more information.

**Dec. 16, 17, 18: The Theater Company to Read A Christmas Carol**

Hoboken-based The Theater Company presents a reading of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, at the Museum. *A Christmas Carol* is the story of the bitter miser

Ebenezer Scrooge who has a chance for redemption one fateful Christmas Eve. Through the visitation of three ghosts, Scrooge travels through time to see how he became the man he is and what his future holds if he continues down that path.

Formerly known as the DeBaun Players, The Theater Company promises a dramatic interpretation to bring the world of Scrooge, Tiny Tim and 19<sup>th</sup> century England to life for young and old alike. This version is family-friendly, and was written and directed by Clara Barton Green.

Performances will begin at **7:30 p.m. on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings, Dec. 16, 17 and 18, at the Museum.** Tickets cost \$15, including refreshments; just \$10 for students and seniors. Tickets will be available for purchase in advance at the Hoboken Historical Museum or at the door. Call 201-656-2240 for more information.

### **Dec. 12, 13, 19, 20: Holiday Shopping at the Museum**

For gifts with a personal, hand-crafted touch, drop by the **Museum's Holiday Crafts Fair** between **noon and 5 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays, December 12, 13, 19 and 20**, at 1301 Hudson St. Local artisans and craftspeople will be selling jewelry, candles, handbags and more.

Or stop by the Museum shop for a book, t-shirt, print, or calendar – the Museum is open six days a week, until 7 p.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. The Museum offers one-of-a-kind items celebrating Hoboken and New Jersey history and culture, plus exclusive t-shirt designs, and other items, including children's books and books on Frank Sinatra. The Museum also offers its own books: *Greetings from Hoboken: A Postcard History*, with more than 350 historic photographic and illustrated images from our collections; *From Another Time, Hoboken in the 1970s*, featuring more than 150 arresting black-and-white photographs of Hoboken from that turnaround decade; *100 Hoboken Firsts*, by Jim Hans; or *On the Waterfront*, by William Miller, an illustrated overview of the cruise lines and shipping industries in Hoboken.

### **About the Hoboken Historical Museum**

Founded 1986, the Museum's mission is to educate the public about Hoboken's history, diverse culture, architecture and historic landmarks. In 2001, the Museum moved into one of the oldest buildings on the waterfront, in the former Bethlehem Steel shipyard, at 1301 Hudson St., Hoboken, where it maintains a series of rotating exhibits. The Museum is open six days a week, 2 – 7 pm on Tues. – Thurs., 1 – 5 pm on Fridays, and noon – 5 pm on weekends. It offers special exhibits, tours, events and lectures, as well as educational programs for adults and children on a weekly basis. An updated schedule of events and an online catalog of many items in its collections are available at [www.hobokenmuseum.org](http://www.hobokenmuseum.org). The Museum is a not-for-profit tax-exempt 501(c) entity.

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*Note to editors: Photos are available; please call 201-683-6935.*