



A RADIO LEGEND

JOHN STERLING, LEGENDARY YANKEES RADIO ANNOUNCER KNOWN FOR EXTRAVAGANT, INDIVIDUALIZED HOME RUN CALLS, DIED MONDAY. HE WAS 87. **B1**

TOTTENVILLE

Belli Baci's unique combo cookie goes viral



Bakers Kristen and her husband Ernie Guzzo, of Belli Baci Bakery in Tottenville, have made a seven-layer rainbow pignoli cookie that has gone viral. Photos by Jan Somma-Hammel, Advance/SILive.com

'It's been a wild ride':

The \$11 hybrid is part seven-layer cookie, part pignoli, and 100% a hit.

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In the classic children's book "If You Give a Mouse a Cookie," Laura Numeroff offers a pretty hilarious take on the consequences of serving up a sweet treat. Give a mouse a cookie and he'll want some milk. And then a straw. And a napkin. Eventually, another cookie.

Apparently, if you give Staten Island a rainbow-pignoli cookie, it will go viral and inspire some national buzz.

Kristin and Ernesto Guzzo, owners of Belli Baci Bakery in Tottenville, know this scenario a little too well: After adding a hybrid rainbow-pignoli cookie to their bakery cases this spring, Islanders went wild, snapping up the sharable delight in rapid fashion. Cue the influencers and the lines, a couple of black-market resales and dozens of imitators. Who knew that blending two of the world's most popular Italian cookies would cause such a viral stir?

"We're finally starting to breathe a little ... it's been a wild ride," said Kristin Guzzo. She and her husband chatted with the Advance/SILive early Wednesday morning on speakerphone — a rare, quiet moment before their now-famous bakery comes to life.

"Honestly? It feels like a blur," Guzzo continued. "A beautiful blur. But I really would like to eat dinner with my family again sometime soon."

The Guzzos, who have owned and operated Belli Baci for 15 years, are no strangers to lines, crowds and sold-out goods: Their bakery is already locally famous for its coveted rainbow donut and full menu of sandwiches, salads and — say it with me now in a nice Staten Island accent — antipasto.

And Ernie Guzzo, who started baking at his father's Sunset Park bakery when



Right before Easter, the bakery was selling over 100 pounds of the cookie each day.

he was just a teen, is known as the "Seven Layer King" — a moniker given by customers who love his outrageous versions of the seven-layer cookie. Think Nutella, apple pie, red velvet, peanut butter, cookie dough and more.

But this outrageous rainbow-pignoli combo is a little more than the Guzzos bargained for. And it was all born on their dining room table in the middle of February's historic blizzard.

"He came home with a bakery-size commercial sheet pan on his shoulder," Kristin Guzzo recalled. "It was full of rainbow and pignoli cookies and he just dropped it on our dining room table."

After a famous social channel featured their rainbow donut in June and Guzzo's seven-layer cannoli got a lot of love around Thanksgiving, the couple had discussed concocting something similar, but new. It took the downtime from one of New York City's worst snowstorms to make that innovation happen.

"My mom and my daughter started breaking open cookies to see the best way to combine them," Guzzo said. "We wrote

SEE BAKERY, A2

PALM BEACH, FLORIDA

Giuliani remains hospitalized in critical condition with pneumonia

His restrictive airway disease — caused by exposure to ground zero — exacerbated his condition, his spokesperson said.

Michael R. Sisak Associated Press

Former New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani is breathing on his own after being hospitalized with pneumonia and placed on a ventilator, his spokesperson said Monday.

Giuliani, 81, remains in critical but stable condition at a Florida hospital and is being monitored as a precautionary measure, spokesperson Ted Goodman said.

Goodman said Giuliani's condition was exacerbated by restrictive airway disease attributed to his exposure to dust and toxins from the Sept. 11, 2001, attack on the World Trade Center.

Giuliani's hospitalization, near Palm Beach, Florida, came after he was heard coughing Friday on his nightly online talk show and hoarsely told viewers that his voice was "a little under the weather."

"This condition adds complications to any respiratory illness, and the virus quickly overwhelmed his body, requiring mechanical ventilation to maintain adequate oxygen and stabilize his condition," Goodman said in a statement.

He described Giuliani as "the ultimate fighter" and said, "he is winning this battle."

Giuliani's family and primary medical provider are by the former mayor's side, Goodman added. He said they thanked

SEE HOSPITAL, A2

ECONOMY

How a weaker dollar is quietly making life more expensive

Matt Sedensky Associated Press

A hidden force is quietly pushing up costs for everything from your summer vacation to your weekly grocery bills: a weaker U.S. dollar.

The dollar has fallen about 10% against other major currencies since President Donald Trump returned to the White House, a pullback potentially playing a role in Americans' concerns about affordability.

"It's kind of a hidden tax," says economist Thomas Savidge of the conservative-leaning American Institute for Economic Research. "What your dollar is going to be able to buy is going to shrink."

A look at where the dollar stands and what it means for you:

HISTORIC DOLLAR DECLINE

The U.S. Dollar Index, which measures the greenback against other major currencies, logged its steepest six-month drop in more than 50 years in the first half of 2025. Though the decline hasn't deepened, the dollar index is still about 10% lower than the start of Trump's term.

A strong dollar makes imports cheaper

SEE ECONOMY, A2

