

The Fourth Generation

By Dennis Kooney



Dennis Kooney and One Year Old Grand Son Matteo

It was a beautiful August day on the deck of the Croton Yacht Club, where four generations of the Kooney family assembled for an afternoon lunch. The river was calm and glass-like and reflected the deep blue sky and lofty clouds as a mirror image. It was an impromptu pizza party, with the goal of getting my 92 year young mother out of her house on a gorgeous day. Joining us was my mother's aide, Sandra, my wife Kathy, my daughter Nicole and my youngest grandson, Matteo.

As we waited for my wife Kathy

to deliver the pizza, I watched my mother gaze out into the mirror of beauty before her as she reconnected to this special place that has meant so much to our family. That tranquility was interrupted by a single syllable word, "Pop"; Matteo had arrived.

Matteo now 15 months, was introduced to the river months prior and ever since, it has been his primary focus. Like my other two grandsons, Colin and Jack, Matteo was "baptized" in river water before his first birthday. In each case the ritual was simple. Pick up a rock and toss

it into the water and watch the river do it's magic. Matteo would stand there for what seemed like hours tossing one rock after another, approaching the water a little closer with each toss until he was up to his ankles in river water and thereby "baptized".

Matteo quickly realized, the larger the rock the larger the splash. My task was to feed him rocks to throw while holding him from going deeper into the water. If the rocks I was supplying were not big enough, he would turn to look for his own-