

THE

Vol. 3, No. 4

Fall, 1990

ITALIC

WAY

The Newsletter of the Italic Studies Institute, Inc.



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Vol. 3 No.4

The Italic Way

Fall, 1990

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Letters

Address all letters to: LETTERS, The Italic Way, PO Box 818, Floral Park, NY 11001

BALBO REMEMBERED

Please accept the enclosed souvenir handkerchief of General Italo Balbo's epic mass flight of 1933 from Rome to Chicago. I have treasured it ever since, on behalf of *Atlantica*, I attended a gala reception in a New York theatre where I sat in a front center balcony row.

Suddenly under me, down the aisles of the theatre, unreced columns of jaunty, smiling young Italian officers, all in gleaming white from caps to shoes. Gathered on stage, they seemed a small army as applause poured over them.

May this momento give the Institute and your worthy colleagues a small thrill. And keep up your great work!

Dominick Lamonica,
Somers, NY

(Ed.- It is with great sadness that we report the passing of Dom Lamonica. As former editor of Atlantica Magazine during the 1930's he was our inspiration to begin publishing The Italic Way. He served his heritage proudly bringing dignity to the image of his people.

We extend our deepest sympathy to his wife and children. They must always remember him a caring human being who remained active to the end.)



A handkerchief commemorating the 1933 flight of an Italian Air Force group across the Atlantic.

A ROMAN ROOT

The frequent repetition of the phrase "draw a line in the sand" in connection with the gulf crisis brings to mind what may be its earliest use. In 168 B.C., Caius Popilius Laenas, envoy of the Roman Senate, met Syrian King Antiochus IV, who was intent on conquering Egypt, outside Alexandria to deliver the Senate's command to end the Syrian invasion. When Antiochus wished to delay his decision, Popilius drew a line in the sand around the Syrian King and told him he must give an answer before stepping out of the circle. Antiochus agreed

to the Roman demand and withdrew his forces, even though the Romans had no army on the scene. Such was the moral power of the Roman Republic.

Albert C. Leighton
San Antonio, TX

(Reprinted from Time Magazine)

BADOGGIO'S SECRET PLAN?

In the article "Mussolini: A Look Back" (Spring 1990), you heap much of the blame for Italy's occupation by the Germans on Marshal Pietro Badoglio. How-



The Infamous Marshal Badoglio

The Italic Way

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Letters

ever, I have heard that Badoglio and the King had a plan to fight the Germans.

The plan was to capitulate to the Allies in secret and keep it secret until the moment was right — bide their time while the Allies planned and executed an invasion of Normandy from the north. This would draw the German forces sent to occupy Italy to the battle front in the north, Italy would remain as if on the German side. Then, at the propitious moment, with Germans weak in the south, the Italians would turn on them and take them prisoner. Badoglio's plan was too good to be true. The English would not accept it. Eisenhower had to tell the Italian government that the surrender must be unconditional and to allow an occupation of Italy.

It may not have been Badoglio's incompetence which caused the rape of Italy, but perhaps that of our own leaders.

**Frank V. D'Ercole,
Alexandria, VA**

(Ed. If that was Badoglio's plan to defend Italy, you can appreciate why the Italians lost the war. We rest our case.)

ELLIS ISLAND CREDIT

In all the joyous festivities for the opening of the newly restored Ellis Island, the role played by one individual,

who initiated the restoration of this historic site, seems to be overlooked.

It was in 1974 that Peter Sammartino, appalled by the dreadful condition that the island and its buildings had fallen into, organized a restore Ellis Island committee. Dr. Sammartino hoped to rectify the decades of neglect of this most important national shrine, and it was only because of his efforts and those



**General Edward Ferrero and his staff,
white leader of Negro troops.**

of the committee that restoration of the island and its buildings was begun. A plaque placed at Ellis Island in 1980 attests to his early work in this regard. It reads: "In honor of Dr. Peter Sammartino, who as President of the Restore

Ellis Island Committee, persuaded Congress to initiate the restoration of this historic island."

It is hoped that in subsequent Ellis Island celebrations his role will be recalled.

**William Roberts
Assoc. Prof. of History
Farleigh Dickinson University
Hackensack, NJ**

(Ed. - Dr. Sammartino is a member of the Advisory Council of the Institute.)

CIVIL WAR REVISITED

For our new readers who have become Civil War buffs since the PBS series on the subject and the movie *Glory*, we refer you to our Fall 1989 issue that featured the story of General Edward Ferrero. Ferrero led one of the first Negro brigades during the war. Surprisingly, Italians played a role, though minor, in the Civil War and another general, Palma di Cesola, even won the Medal of Honor. (He later became the first director of New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Another curious fact was that President Lincoln offered Giuseppe Garibaldi a generalship in 1861. The Italian freedom fighter turned down the offer when he was informed that the abolition of slavery was not a war aim.

FUTURE ISSUES OF THE ITALIC WAY

- ITALIAN-ENGLISHMEN - Bloody geniuses
 - SICILY - Italic from the start
- EARLY ROCK - Before the Beatles Italians ruled.
 - MAFIA - Strangers among us
- ITALIAN DEBT - What Italy owes Italian-Americans



All'Italiana

CHRYSLER-FIAT

Although Chrysler Chairman Lee A. Iacocca termed the announcement premature, initial reports from Italy's Fiat S.p.A. indicated that the two automotive giants were near agreement on assorted business ventures. Fiat Chairman Giovanni Agnelli had suggested that the companies were within sight of some sort of formal arrangement. Mr. Iacocca demurred but added that early discussions focused on "lots and lots of different projects." Perhaps when next they meet, Lido and Gianni will reveal the shape of tail fins to come.

ITALY GETS THE REDS OUT

Communists of the peninsula take flight. You have nothing to lose but your symbols, your name and your place in Italian politics. After a year of soul searching, backbiting and handwringing, Western Europe's strongest communist party is taking a cue from Marxist ideology and withering away. Gone are the hammer and sickle (or merely reduced) and the word "Communist". Henceforth the party will be referred to as the "Democratic Party of the Left." This is a victory for party secretary Achille Occhetto, who led the fight against Communist party hard liners. It is an even bigger victory for former prime minister Bettino Craxi, who renamed his party "Socialist Unity." With this new appellation and the communist disarray, Mr. Craxi hopes to dominate Italian politics as he did several years ago. It may spell the end of Italy's musical chair democracy.

FOR THE BIRDS

Recently, old bird bones made University of Chicago paleontologist Paul Sereno chirp with delight. His reconstruction of a 135 million-year-old fossil found in China in 1987 made news

worldwide. It is believed to be the remains of the world's oldest bird. According to Sereno, this winged creature "would probably appear modern, with flying and perching abilities virtually identical to today's birds." However, this ancient avian ancestor also sported talons, marking it as an evolutionary link between dinosaurs and our modern-day birds. Whatever the nomenclature, such an achievement is a feather in paleontologist Paul Sereno's cap.



The late Stefano Casiraghi with family. His children are Monaco's guarantee of independence

NO PROBLEM

Some Italian-Americans think they have image problems. They only have to put up with are cretins in California who think vanity tags like *Top Wop* and *Dago* are first amendment rights. And what's so bad about this year's bumper crop of Mafia movies, Mario Brothers cartoons, and tasteless television sitcoms. Not to mention being blamed for all criminal jargon in the English language in a book

by public opinion maker Robert MacNeil. Even newscaster Sam Donaldson defends his God-given right to question any American with an Italian surname about his or her Mafia connections. Likewise, Disney World's Tony's "breaka you face" Restaurant on Main Street, USA is just an unbiased crowd pleaser. These are are of little concern to complacent Italo-Americans or even the Italian government.

Meanwhile, some Asian-Americans

truly believe that they bear the brunt of ethnic smears. Insidious racism stereotypes Asians as being "good at math" or "workaholics" or just "over-achievers." Japanese, who still treat the unpure in their nation as non-citizens, are miffed at the labelling. The United States government has roundly condemned the bashing.

Germans, too, believe they are the objects of mindless utterances. No less than the German ambassador in Chile lodged a protest against Army chief Pinochet who had the gall to malign the new German Army as "drug addicts, long hairs, gays and union members." The Chilean government was quick to apologize to the "new" peace-loving Germans.

There is a lesson in all this.

Just pick on Italians. By comparison, they really aren't that sensitive.

SEXPLOITER

His public relations man lambasted *The Italic Way* for "malignment" of his boss Bob Guccione of *Penthouse Magazine* (Spring 1990). Little did we know that the "Gucch" dealt in sexual slavery and was convicted in a Manhattan court on the charge.



All'Italiana

The man who would defame the Roman/Italic people in the pornographic flick *Caligula* also passed a bedmate around for the carnal pleasures of his staff. A class guy.

STATE OF HEALTH

Despite their incessant smoking and alcohol consumption (Italy is the *numero uno* importer of alcoholic beverages in the world), the average Italian lives a year longer than the average European. Life expectancy is 72 years for men and 78.6 years for women.

However, Italians south of Rome live somewhat below the European average. In addition, obesity is also more prevalent in the *Mezzogiorno (South)*.

Overall, cardiovascular diseases account for 44.7% of deaths and cancers account for 26.6%. Even AIDS is no stranger to the peninsula, and health authorities estimate nearly 40,000 cases in 1992.

Despite the usual complaints arising out of socialized medicine, Italians do not have the added fear of being financially wiped out by illness, as Americans do. If a hospital kills you in Italy you only die. In the United States you die but they also send you a bill. Moreover, about a third of all Italians are exempt from fees for medical tests and drug therapies.

LADY OF THE COIN

Her sculptor husband Anthony idealized her features in the Greek fashion, but that face was pure Italic. America knew her as Miss Liberty on the Peace Dollar of 1921 but her real

name was Teresa De Francisci (*franchee-she*), born Teresa Cafarelli in a town south of Naples.

Mrs. De Francisci passed away in October at the age of 92. Ever proud of her heritage, she always remembered that she was the first Italian-American to graduate from the local high school in Clinton, Mass.

Her husband was a noted designer who also created the inaugural medal for the 1964-65 World's Fair. But his classic work was the Peace Dollar minted after the First World War, which was produced

from 1921 to 1928 and 1934 to 1935. Curiously, Mr. De Francisci wasn't a coin collector and never saved a Peace Dollar for himself. "Anthony was content to do the creating and let others do the collecting," said the Mrs.



The dollar with an Italian face

overtaken Princess Caroline of Monaco with the loss of her husband Stefano Casiraghi is heartfelt. The boating accident that took his life at age 30 has left her a widow with three young children to care for alone.

During his brief marriage, Stefano guaranteed the continuance of the Italic rule of Monaco, a tiny nation founded by the Grimaldi clan of Genoa in 1297. As we reported in our Summer 1989 issue, without another generation of offspring the Mediterranean state could have reverted to France in the distant future. The Casiraghi children are not only the pride of mother Caroline, they are the future of Monaco.

DONE DEAL

The long awaited purchase of MGM-UA by Italian financier Giancarlo Parretti was finalized in November when Parretti's firm, Pathe', delivered the last installment of the \$1.3 billion purchase money. (See Spring, 1990.) Parretti's new film library includes 3,000 American favorites.

FIRST TO DIE

For the record, the first death recorded in Operation Desert Shield in Saudi Arabia was Air Force Staff Sergeant John Campisi of Covina, California. Sgt. Campisi was struck by a truck during night-time aircraft landings on the night of August 12th.

HIS LEGACY LIVES

The tragedy that has



Frontpage of New York Daily News
Guccione the slavedriver



World Notes

[We present this section to inform our readers of events and trends that may be of interest with regard to ethnic opinions or cultural values.]

INTERNATIONAL INEFFICIENCY

It is with a wink and a nod that we report that incompetence is not exclusively the province of any particular ethnic group, as the media would have the public believe.

For those who defame the Italian mails as slow and inefficient, hold your guffaws for the U.S. Postal Service. Imagine a postcard that took 31 years to arrive! That's right. A thoughtful tourist mailed the greeting from Las Vegas in 1959 and it was finally delivered this year to Mineola, New York. So what was the problem? Stamped on the business side of the postcard was the reason: *Delay due to no/bad zip code*. Unfortunately, the bureaucrat who stamped that excuse overlooked the fact that zip codes weren't invented until 1963.

Or how about the French publisher Larousse which had to recall 180,000 copies of its much-revered dictionary of flora. It seems that a highly poisonous mushroom was identified as harmless. A \$5.5 million typo.

And lest you think German efficiency is without fault, try ordering a telephone in the land of schnapps. Between six weeks and three months is the expected wait. Even then, the man who installs the jack cannot plug in the phone (that's another department). Finally, when you make your first call you better not stay on too long. The operators at the *Bundespost* will routinely disconnect the call if it exceeds a reasonable (i.e. efficient) time. Oh those crazy Teutons!

THE HEALTH OF NATIONS

In addition to its high rate of illiteracy vis-a-vis most of the industrialized world, the United States holds another dubious global record. We have the third highest infant-mortality rate among developed nations. Only Greece and Israel have more appalling rates. These nations can blame third-world health facilities, ethnic differences or a hard scrabble standard of living for their

wide illegal gambling operation in the crime-infested Mott Street section of Chinatown. T.C. (Eddie) Chan, who emigrated to the United States from Hong Kong, was identified as the warlord of organized crime in Chinatown by an agent of the Federal Drug Enforcement Administration during a hearing before the President's Commission on Organized Crime in October 1984. In addition to the racketeering and gambling charges, other charges include conspiracy to bribe a judge, collection of unlawful debts and solicitation to commit murder.

HARA KARI CRIME CARTEL

Gangsters run back-alley gambling operations in major urban centers. Crime syndicates flourish against a backdrop of corporate and political corruption. Prostitution is rampant and the homeless abound. Sound familiar? It should. It's made in Japan — Osaka, Japan. In October 1990, 2,500 police battled for five nights with 1,500 rock-wielding rioters

in Airin, a ramshackle neighborhood of Osaka. And orchestrating all the malevolence was the omnipresent octopus of Japanese organized crime, the Yakuza. Gee, maybe these are the real "Goodfellas". Pay attention Samurai Scorsese-san.

GERMAN STENCHMANSHIP

Whatever happened to those pristine Prussians of yore? From piles of paper, plastic and foil to filthy refuse in the streets of Berlin, a mountain of garbage is befouling the newborn German



The 1959 postcard that survived the postal service

plight. America, however, is a far more advanced country and cannot. Experts at the University of Texas School of Nursing agree that infant mortality is a leading barometer of a nation's overall health.

FOR WHOM THE TONG TOLLS

Reputed organized crime figure T.C. (Eddie) Chan and two leaders of the National Leong Chinese Merchants Association, Yu Lip May and Chan Wing Yeung, were among 29 people indicted by a Federal grand jury in New York in September 1990 for operating a nation-



World Notes

state. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, Berlin's once-effective garbage collection system has buckled under the free market system. Maybe this is evidence of cultural dissonance. That is, the outgrowth of a people who lack both the managerial expertise and the hygienic heritage of an advanced nation. Or is it the byproduct of two states masquerading as one, a prosperous and entrepreneurial nation alongside a slothful, backward and quasi-feudal state?

DRACHMA LAUNDERING

The general manager and thirteen other bank officials of the National Mortgage Bank of Greece in New York City and Long Island face five year prison sentences and fines totalling \$8 million for the largest non-drug related money laundering scheme in U.S. history.

Over \$700 million was filtered through the Athens-based bank to avoid U.S. taxes.

It may be safe to say that these criminals pulled the crime off without consulting Mafia "experts".

B-BALL SHOCKER

Consider America lucky this time. It nearly came to pass that the world-class New York Knicks basketball team were bested by, of all people, some Italian boys in shorts.

The Knicks squeaked out a last minute 119-115 victory over the Scavolini Pesaro team in a meet in Barcelona, Spain. At one point the Italians were ahead by five points only to succumb to an embarrassed Patrick Ewing who saved the day.

FRENCH CAPTURED

Were they of another nationality, the international press may have used such phrases as "war-weary draftees" or

"blundering lovers, not warriors" and a verb like "surrendered" instead of "captured." However, common decency prevailed among the press corps in the reporting of Iraq's first "victory" in the Kuwaiti crisis.

It seems that three soldiers of the French contingent got lost in the Saudi desert and were captured by Iraqi troops. Though embarrassed at being the war's first prisoners, the Frenchmen were returned physically fit to their own side. With any luck they will return happily to their *mere, vin, and formage*.

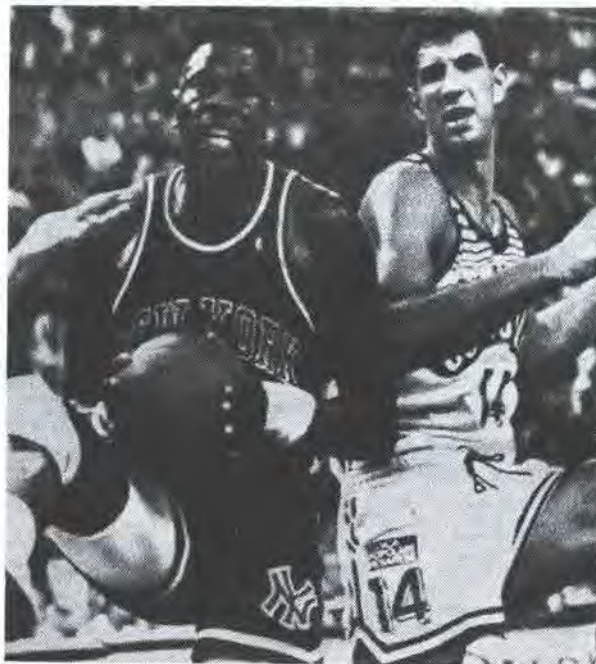
L A T I N ROOTS RESTORED

Most people know that Italian, French, Spanish, and Portuguese are derivations of Latin, an Italic language. However, the mother tongue also give birth to Catalan (Spain), Romansch (Switzerland), and Romanian. Surrounded as they were by Hungarians and Slavs, Romanians clung to their Latin roots over the centuries.

With the breakdown of the Soviet Union, the territory of Moldavia inside the USSR has proclaimed its *latinita'*. August 30th has been declared a national holiday in Moldavia for on that day Romanian was made the official language again. Along with the restored language, Moldavians must now cope with the Roman alphabet instead of the Cyrillic Russian.

ITALY COMMITS UNEASILY

Italy has committed four war ships and eight aircraft to the Persian Gulf force. However, Italians have not forgotten how their last joint effort with Americans, French and British ended. Ill-prepared French and U.S. Marine defenses in Lebanon cost the lives of hundreds of those troops to car bombs while



New York Knicks Patrick Ewing gets the better of Italian player Ario Costa. The Italians have mastered another sport.

they slept, effectively forcing the entire peace-keeping force to evacuate in shame. Italian *Bersaglieri*, on the other hand, had ringed their barracks with cargo containers and befriended the Lebanese and Palestinians.

In the current crisis it is interesting to note that in Italy the price of gasoline is the highest in the world (\$4.92 per gallon) to discourage dependence on Middle East oil.



Editorial

DON'T HOLD YOUR TONGUE

In the *Pink Panther* motion pictures, veteran character Herbert Lom was driven to near insanity by the ever-bumbling Inspector Clouseau. While recuperating in the sanitarium, Lom was lulled to tranquility by a soothing psychological mantra: "Every day in every way, things are getting better."

Unfortunately, Italian-Americans driven to despair by the likes of *Goodfellas*, *Betsy's Wedding*, *The Fanelli Boys*, *My Blue Heaven*, and the soon-to-be-released *Godfather III* have no such nostrum. Every day in every way, they are subjected to socially sanctioned slurs. Worse yet, they are vilified in print, bashed on screen and stereotyped by neighbors, friends, and in some cases, other Italians. Instead of closing ranks with their brethren, some Italo-Americans find a perverse catharsis in belittling their more sensitive fellows. *What's your problem? It's only a joke. Lighten up. You'll never change anything. You're so nationalistic! Look, everybody suffered, not just the Italians. Well, you have to admit that some Italians are like that*

Space considerations prevent me from detailing an encyclopedia's worth of such protestations. By denying the extent of the media brainwashing, these self-hating Italic folk feel they are more readily Americanized. They partake of their heritage by buying the latest Tommy LaSorda spaghetti sauce or speaking wistfully of Ellis Island and how we are all the children of suffering, unkempt immigrants. The 2,500 year sweep of Italian civilization eludes these acolytes of Coppola, Puzo and Talese. Ask them about modern-day Italy and its status as a preeminent industrial power and they'll nod absent-mindedly with a vacant stare. Tell them that Italy overtook Great Britain economically and expect an animated defense of the sceptered isle by doubting Tomasso's with Italic surnames.

For a movement to succeed, it must have solidarity in its ranks. And there must be a major change in the thinking of all its card-carrying adherents. However, this requires hard work and even, dare I say it, an ideology. Vociferous letter writing campaigns, grass roots efforts, television and film boycotts and out-and-out image burnishing must be the lot of Italo-Americans. Only by rewarding the good and punishing the bad do we stand a chance of restoring the image.

- RAI

CROSSED SIGNALS

There is obviously no collusion within the ranks of the Italic people. That may explain why film actor Alan Alda got panned in *The Italic Way* for his insulting portrayal of Italian-Americans in the film *Betsy's Wedding* and why he was honored by the National Italian-American Foundation (NIAF).

We can only suggest that NIAF did not see the film or chose not to feel insulted.

In any event, Mr. Alda must now believe he did the right thing by his father's people.

- JLM

The Italic Way™

The official newsletter of the Italic Studies Institute, Inc., a nonprofit corporation headquartered in Floral Park, NY

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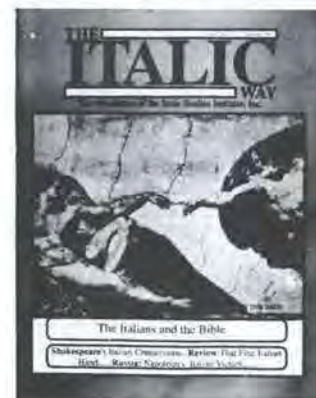
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Forum of the People



Ron Rosa, the outspoken owner of *Campagnola* and *Ecco*.

A Frank Capra They Ain't

Like most Italian-Americans, I am upset by the way we are portrayed as criminals in the media. But unlike most of my ethnic fellows I was able to demonstrate my anger after seeing the movie *GoodFellas*.

I literally closed my restaurant doors to three of the creators of *GoodFellas* — DiNiro, Scorsese, and Pileggi. (At least two of them had enjoyed dining at my establishments.) And to make my displeasure with them known, I issued a press release which was picked up by the *New York Post* and TV's *Entertainment Tonight*. I know the message got through to these "good fellas" because the news media brought it directly to their attention. One of the trio responded by saying, "Well, that's Rosa's opinion." Unfortunately, my opinion doesn't reach an audience of millions the way his perversion of Italian culture does.

It is obvious that Martin Scorsese set out to make fast money on *GoodFellas*. The problem is that he did it at the expense of our fine Italian heritage. This is my gripe with him. Cheap shots come from small people. Instead of using his talents and

“ I literally closed my restaurant doors to three of the creators of *GoodFellas* — DiNiro, Scorsese, and Pileggi.”

position in the film industry to produce works which will have positive effects, Scorsese has chosen to perpetuate the myth that Italian-Americans, as a group, revere gangsters and members of the Mafia. He has used his position unfairly to foster negative stereotypes.

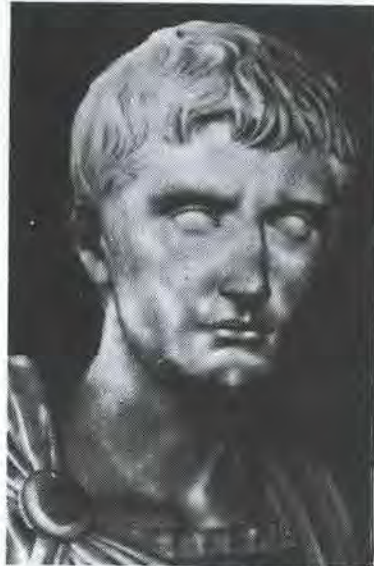
It is getting to the point that not only we, as Americans of Italian descent, are being type-cast as having a proclivity toward crime but our creative geniuses, i.e., Scorsese, Coppola, Pacino, et. al., are finding themselves locked into earning a living off that false image.

I cannot help but wonder what would happen if all Italian-Americans sent a message, as I am doing, to these image-makers. There is no reason that filmmakers of Scorsese's caliber need to drag the Italian heritage through the gutter in order to satisfy their artistic needs. After all, Frank Capra and Vincente Minnelli managed to immortalize Italian-American artistry while adding incalculably more class to the screen. Can't we expect our current generation of artists to seek more positive means of expression?

(Mr. Ron Rosa is the owner of two prominent Manhattan restaurants: Campagnola (1st Ave. & 73rd St.) and Ecco (124 Chambers St.)



REVIEW



Octavian He shared his uncle Julius' genius.

Augustus

A novel by John Williams

Thanks to Hollywood's myth makers, a majority of Americans — and this includes a preponderance of Italian-Americans — cannot identify the great Roman heroes of antiquity. But they all are able to recall Richard Burton as Alexander the Great or Charlton Heston as Ben Hur. Older moviergoers still speak fondly of Victor Mature's exploits as Samson. Ask these selfsame film buffs about Cincinnatus and they'll refer to Lou Piniella's world championship Reds. Mention Caesar Augustus and many will wax nostalgic about Edward G. Robinson. Indeed, the father of the *Pax Romana* and the architect of Italian primacy is history's forgotten hero. Yet in John Williams' stunning novel of the same name, Augustus comes to life as never before.

All too often, the ancient Romans, like their modern day Italian descendants, are portrayed as sadistic heavies. This is as true of the printed page as it is of the silver screen. What has been forgotten in the rush to historical defamation, is the violent nature of the ancient

world. Moses butchered 3,000 of his own people at Sinai. Carthage routinely practiced child sacrifice. Israelites stoned adulterous women in the street. Sparta was a brutal military dictatorship akin to Stalinist Russia. The Romans, by comparison, were a reserved bunch. The Roman way included a system of laws, governmental checks and balances, the emancipation of women (relative to all other Ancients), public education, public baths and representative democracy. Caesar August presided over this "kinder, gentler" realm — and instituted 200 years of peace and prosperity.

Augustus is the story of an unlikely hero thrust upon the world stage at a moment of crisis. Although possessed of a first-rate mind and superior leadership skills, Julius Caesar's nephew and adopted son did not evince a formidable mien. Frail and sallow of complexion, he resembled a reluctant college sophomore who has just been drafted. But, as John Williams' novel so expertly illuminates, Gaius Octavius Caesar was no mere pup. He avenged his great uncle's death, restored order to Italy and created a new world order all before the age of 35. No other Western leader, past or present, can boast of so monumental an achievement at such a tender age. Not Theodore Roosevelt. Not John F. Kennedy. Not even Alexander or Bonaparte.

This novel is presented as a series of letters written by the principal characters to each other. For once we see Romans not as stereotyped conquerors of a tiny city-state but as Italians very much in love with their homeland of Italy.

(Letter from Julius Caesar to Atia, 45 B.C.)

I trust that your summer at Puteoli (Pozzuoli) was a pleasant one, and that you are now back in the city for the season. Restless as I am, I long for Italy now.

When writing about ancient Rome, too many American authors resort to verbosity at the expense of clarity. They also tend to Anglicize the protagonists. The Italians of yore were not overweight, unctious Englishmen with lisps. The Romans were rational, dedicated patriots who lived, loved and shed blood for their country. John Williams achieves what few other writers have even contemplated. He depicts a vibrant, thriving, resilient Roman world — warts and all. Yes, men die in battle and treachery does exist. But so does valor. Cicero, Livy and the Roman Senate take their lumps. And the transition from republic to dictatorship to empire is a rocky one. But in the end, the Italo-Roman empire, like Lincoln's fabled Union, survived. And like America's Abraham, Italy's Augustus forever changed the fate of man on earth.

- RAI



The ruler of the Western World (27 B.C - 14 A.D.)



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The Italic Way



Focus

ADVERTISING: ITALIAN STYLE

by John Mancini, John Caggiano, Michelle Struffolino

We all know a little bit about the advertising game. Think of a catchy slogan, put a provocative photo or live action behind it, sales increase, and presto, the client loves you and the agency rakes in the money. And of course, there's the other side — writer's block, a dud slogan, flat sales, and tragedy strikes — the client gives you the boot.

Basically, that is exactly what Madison Avenue is all about. If there was ever a business that was predicated on the notion "what did you do for me today?" it's advertising. High pressure, anything-goes creativity, human psychology, brevity in the extreme, instant image. These are just some of the facets of today's ad world.

So how have Italian-Americans fared in such an industry? Not badly. In fact, agencies with Italian-American partners are among the high profile firms promoting ads we see every day. Fisher Price toys, Saab, Volvo, Lifestyles Condoms, Cutty Sark Scotch, Aetna Life & Casualty, Dexatrim, AT&T, Dupont, General Motors, BMW and many more. Much such as their counterparts in the motion picture industry like Frank Mancuso head of Paramount Pictures and Giancarlo Parretti, the new owner of MGM, Italian-Americans in advertising have secured key positions in a medium that influences our values and our spending habits. It hasn't been an easy achievement, and it didn't happen overnight.

Amil Gargano, Chairman, President and Creative Director of Ally & Gargano sees the early 1950's as the era that set off the old world of advertising from the new. Prior to that time,

upper crust America and old money ruled the industry. Advertising was comparatively staid and ad-men came to accounts by way of college chums and social connections. Slogans were only snappy, artwork was reserved and products were the routine sort -- detergents, automobiles, and the like.

Compare that to today's thought-provoking one-liners and an assortment of consumer goods that include condoms, vaginal deodorants, diarrhea remedies, and candid discussions about AIDS.

The end of the Second World War probably had a lot to do with the dismantling of the old guard but whatever it was Italic creativity became the usual method of entree into Madison Avenue for Italian-Americans. There are basically three sides to an advertising agency: copy, artwork, and account management. Of the



Perrier:
"Earth's first soft drink"
(Waring & LaRosa)

three, Italian-Americans gained their foothold in artwork and to a lesser degree, copy. Once in, their healthy ambition motivated many to rise within existing firms as did Chairman Jerry Siano and President Dom Rossi at super agency N.W.



Joe LaRosa
(Waring & LaRosa)



Jerry Della Femina
(Della Femina McNamee)



Jerry Siano
(N.W. Ayer)



Amil Gargano
(Ally & Gargano)



Tony Angotti
(Angotti, Thomas,
Hedge)

Focus



**"I enjoy sex,
but I'm not ready
to die for it."**

I never thought having an orgasm when riding with someone could be a matter of life or death. But with everything I hear about AIDS these days, I'm more than a little fearful. I'm afraid.

AIDS isn't just a gay disease. It's everybody's disease.

And everybody who gets it dies.

AIDS is transmitted from one sexual partner to another, often by a single unprotected contact. The disease without even knowing it.

But what we need so desperately about this terrible disease is that people are taking a little to try to prevent it.

Especially since the Surgeon General recently warned: "The best protection against infection is to use barrier protection, in the form of a condom."

It's for this reason that we at LifeStyles say that the proper use of a LifeStyles Brand Condom can greatly reduce the chances of you or your partner contracting AIDS.

Because a LifeStyles condom acts as a shield that helps prevent the transfer of the AIDS virus. So the likelihood of catching this disease is dramatically diminished. And LifeStyles Brand Condoms, when properly used, help prevent other sexually transmitted diseases like herpes and gonorrhea.

So use LifeStyles condoms. Not only as a precaution, but as a safeguard. Because prevention of disease is an important goal.

LifeStyles condoms are available in many sizes and colors. For more information, call 1-800-368-3688.

© 1987 LifeStyles, Inc. All rights reserved. AIDS is a deadly disease. It can be prevented.



Lifestyles Condoms (Della Femina McNamee)

then, that this pioneer was not an inspiration to Italian-Americans who followed.

For most, Jerry Della Femina (*Feh-mee'-nah*) who founded his own agency in the late 60's, is the more inspirational ad-man, maybe because he wrote the book. That classic work, *From Those Wonderful Folks Who Gave You Pearl Harbor*, was published in 1970 and although it is obviously dated by its roster of older brand names it remains the irreverent classic of the business. In exposing the ins and outs of advertising it clearly satirizes human nature. Madison Avenue plays on all our foibles, innate

Ayer. But most others broke loose and started up their own agencies, generally with non-Italic partners. Angotti, Thomas, Hedge. Della Femina McNamee. Waring & LaRosa. Ammirati & Puris. Ally & Gargano. Scali McCabe Sloves.

Probably the first agency owned by an Italian-American was Lennon & Newell back in the early 1960's. Acquired by Adolph Toigo (*Toe-ee-go*), it earned some \$300 million annually until it faltered and eventually went broke. Many ascribe Toigo's demise to his stubborn refusal to share command or to allow initiative among subordinates. It is not surprising,

fears and desires. One humorous tale involves an instant cake mix that only called for water in its recipe. The product flopped at first until the agency recommended that the recipe not be so instant; to include breaking an egg into the mix. Human nature dictated that to be "homemade" one has to at least crack an egg. Sales took off.

To the extent that advertising is a very personal profession in which the seller must be thoroughly familiar with his buyer's weaknesses, Italian-Americans may have a distinct

(Continued on p. 15)



The newly-won Saab account (Angotti, Thomas, Hedge)

Asbestos abatement is like defusing a bomb. 99% right is 100% wrong.



Asbestos is dangerous stuff. When construction or repairs break into it, deadly asbestos dust can explode into the air, a little like a bomb.

That's not a bad way to think of it. Because if you treat your asbestos problem as carefully as you'd treat a live bomb, you'll choose the right abatement company.

You'll avoid those companies with little or no experience. This is not a business for beginners. And you don't want to become their experiment.

Let the abatement buyer beware.

Before you choose an abatement company, there are some key questions you should ask

Is it an established company with a proven track record? Will they be around five years from now? Does their previous experience qualify them for such specialized work? Do they have the resources to handle any job without long delays? The right answers will not only save

you grief. They'll likely lead you to us. Ogden Allied does every abatement project the way it should be done—with professionals who work strictly by the book.

**Every technician licensed.
Every method EPA/OSHA approved.**

Every Ogden Allied worker is thoroughly trained, licensed and certified. Every worker uses the latest technology and newest most capable equipment.

Every workcrew knows and follows the proper work methods. All federal, state and local regulations are complied with in full.

**Site inspection
and
consultation.**

Ogden Allied begins every project with a complete site inspection. Our asbestos abatement specialists consult with you in detail to minimize interruptions, so that everyone understands in advance exactly what will need to be done.

Free quotation.

We never start an abatement project without a quotation. Neither should you. We'll give you one that's reliable and not just an educated guess.

We remove asbestos as carefully as we would a bomb. We do it right the first time.

Call Ogden Allied Abatement and Decontamination Services at 1-800-858-0123. Or write us at 2 Penn Plaza, New York, NY 10121.



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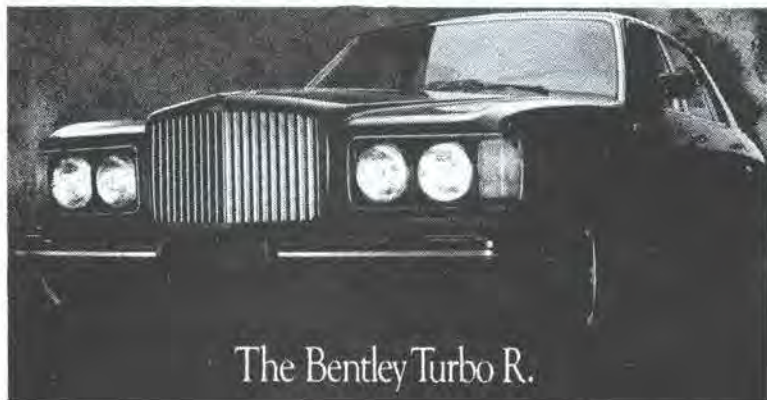
Advertising: Italian Style

(Continued from p. 13)



advantage. If anything, the Italic nature is basically humanistic and Italian culture goes right to the heart of man's basic needs be it food, fashion, or life's pleasures. Almost to a man, the advertisers we interviewed admitted that being "Italian" contributed heavily to their creativity and expressiveness. Amil Gargano recalls an ad campaign he worked on for Pan Am in which he featured a young man traveling to Italy in search of his roots. It was, says Gargano, a warm feeling instilled in him by his Italian-born parents. Even more to the point, Joe LaRosa of Waring & LaRosa made the connection with heritage in the now famous "That's Italian!" slogan for Ragu Spaghetti Sauce. LaRosa is quick to add that he never dabbled in stereotypes when doing the Ragu account. "Even the Italian-American mothers in our commercials (they were the finicky judges of non-Italian cooks who used Ragu) spoke good English and acted with some dignity," says LaRosa.

Their Italian side shows too in the management style at their agencies. N.W. Ayer's Chairman Jerry Siano is "in your face,"



The Bentley Turbo R.

The Bentley (Rolls Royce)
(Della Femina, McNamee)

Fast-talking executive
from the Federal
Express commercials
(Ally & Gargano)



Ragu Tomato Sauce
(Waring & LaRosa)

according to a former employee referring to Siano's direct and involved employee relations. Likewise, Italic bosses at the other agencies shy away from charts and calculators favoring instead hands-on participation in client products. This bespeaks their background in the creative side of the business.

No Connections

Although, many of the Italic-led agencies work on Italian food products, none of them has major accounts with clients from Italy. Gargano did some work for Fiat in years past and Della Femina worked with Cinzano, but there is just no automatic contact between these Americans and their Italian cousins. And while it may be said that Italian firms do not advertise a great deal, the ones that do are fashion oriented (Armani, for example) and are handled by specialized agencies. As for Alitalia, Pirelli, Olivetti and the rest, the truth is, business is business, and there are certainly no bonus points for being an Italian-American. Ironically, Jerry Della Femina recounts how he namedropped the Cinzano account in Dallas once and left his prospective Texan client unimpressed. After all, assumed the would-be client, it must be easy for an Eye-talian to get a lock on Cinzano.

Rocky Road

It is certainly easy enough to start an agency; surviving is something else. When Jerry Della

(Continued on p. 18)



Perspectives

[Highlights of historical records that shed light on modern times]

Johann Pestalozzi: Educator without Peer

by Elio Zappulla

Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827), a Swiss of Italian ancestry, introduced educational reforms that forever altered the world of teaching. Strongly influenced by Italian humanistic values as well as by such enlightened social theorists as Jean Jacques Rousseau, Pestalozzi brought a new vision to the world of academe. Pestalozzi's contributions marked a departure from the rote teaching precepts of 18th Century Zurich.

Perhaps it was no accident that the man who would introduce humanistic values to teaching was descended from free-thinking Italian stock. In the 16th century, during the Protestant Reformation, a group of over 100 Italian Protestants, Pestalozzi's kin among them, left Locarno, now the capital of Italian-speaking Switzerland, and fled for refuge in Zurich.

There can be little doubt that through these immigrant ancestors and his own studies of Italy, Pestalozzi came to ap-

preciate the historical primacy of Italic education. As British educator, J.C. Stobart of Cambridge University, noted: "Education was more general and more accessible to the poor in A.D. 200 than in A.D. 1850." Indeed, the Romans had established compulsory public education



Today's classroom would be a far different environment if it were not for Pestalozzi.

and law school.

More directly, Pestalozzi was strongly influenced in the direction of reform by several of his teachers at the Collegium Carolinum in Zurich. Among them was Johann Bodmer, founder of the Helvetian Society, an

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organization that agitated for social and political reform in Switzerland in the era preceding the French Revolution and Napoleon. Pestalozzi's involvement with the group earned him a reputation, not entirely justified, for political radicalism and also earned him some time in prison for his activities which the government perceived as seditious. But his

originally purchased with a view to becoming an experimental farmer. He began educating children at *Neuhof* by putting into practice ideas he had begun to formulate. Unlike the prevailing practice, children at Pestalozzi's "school" at the farm were treated with love and kindness. The children were taught by doing, by using their hands to manipulate ob-

as well as their critical faculties. Pestalozzi believed that, while education cannot, by itself, make a child intelligent, it must strive to develop to the utmost the child's innate capacities. Above all, the child must be loved, treasured and respected, something quite foreign to the old school.

Later, Pestalozzi founded a

Students were encouraged to think for themselves, to find their own solutions to problems...

association with reformers and agitators prepared him for his work in education by arousing in him a consciousness of social injustice.

Having noted the plight of poor children, and especially their neglected education, he and his wife, Anna, took in abandoned children on the *Neuhof*, or New Farm, which he had

jects, by thinking problems through rather than by memorizing facts from books. Emphasis was placed on math and science, something unheard of at that time, and religious studies were de-emphasized. Students were encouraged to think for themselves, to find their own solutions to problems, to play as well as to work and learn, to develop their bodies

school at Yverdon which continued to educate children, especially the poor and neglected or abandoned, along the same theoretical principles. Though financially unsuccessful, Yverdon became a beacon for educators and theorists around the world. Those who visited Yverdon returned inspired by what

(Continued on next page)



Perspectives

(Continued from preceding page)

they saw.

Pestalozzi's ideas, which seem so commonplace to us, were quite radical in his time. And while he was viewed by most of his contemporaries as a failure because he was constantly on the brink of poverty and financial ruin, in another sense he must be seen as a truly successful person. For his ideas were taken up by others and spread to other countries. Merging with notions of education from other sources, including another of Italic stock, Maria Montessori, his revolutionary program served to alter the course of educational theory and practice in Europe and ultimately in the United States. Indeed, public education in this country, especially



Johann Pestalozzi:
A child learns by experiencing
not memorizing.

at the elementary level, owes an incalculable debt to the energetic, compassionate and single-minded way in which Johann Pestalozzi sought to alter the view of the child and the teacher.

Those privileged to work with Pestalozzi testified to his genuine devotion to children. An incredibly hard worker (his day began at 3 A.M.), he spent his life in pursuit of his dream, oblivious to the great hardships that his devotion to his cause brought him and his family. After his death in 1827, his disciples engraved these fitting words on Pestalozzi's tombstone: "Everything for others, nothing for himself."

Advertising: Italian Style

(Continued from p. 15)

Femina and partner Ron Travisano launched their enterprise two decades ago they knew they were in financial straits after the first three months. Down to only five or six thousand dollars in reserve for salaries and overhead they figured to bluff their way to solvency by throwing a \$3,000 Christmas party inviting a thousand guests. The go-for-broke party gave them a new lease on life. The budding agency exuded success and the crowd included some potential clients. A crazy idea, but the kind advertising is all about. Della Femina now counts Rolls Royce and Perry Ellis among his upscale clients.

Joe LaRosa's agency history is a case study of "out of the jaws of defeat." Owned by LaRosa and partner Sol Waring, the agency was sold to a conglomerate in 1984. After five years of bureaucracy, business plummeted. LaRosa's prized client Fisher Price, which had grown from \$28 million to



Despite common ethnicity, there isn't much business between Italy and Italian-American ad agencies. Fiat ad (circa 1970's) (Ally & Gargano)

\$850 million in sales thanks to LaRosa's trail-blazing magazine ads, took away most of their account. Ragu which increased sales from \$40 million to \$500 million under LaRosa pulled its account. And even Perrier, "Earth's First Soft Drink" left the fold. Waring and LaRosa were at their lowest point. But within five months the tide turned. Progresso Foods

came on board. Perrier, which ran into benzene trouble, and Fisher Price, both had a change of heart. Miracles do happen, but they need a little push.

And if we were to wish for a happy ending to our story of Italic advertisers it would be that Italy's giant industries discover them. Imagine Italian craftsmanship linked to Italian-American creativity. The possibilities are endless.



Liar Joe Isuzu
(Della Femina, Travisano)

THE ITALIAN-AMERICAN "PLACE" MAT

What's In A Name





Project Italia

A film production to commemorate 2,500 years of Italic civilization and migrations.

In The Works

Make no mistake about it. The Italic Studies Institute is not just a bureaucracy with a nice newsletter. Our resources are funneled into projects that are designed to educate millions of Americans. We like to see ourselves as an alternative means of enhancing the Italic image. Our projects are aimed at helping all Italian-Americans.

Under the auspices of our Project Italia program, we are developing products that deliver the true meaning of the Italian heritage.

Italian-American "Placemat"

Imagine going to a pizzeria or local family restaurant and learning about Italian contributions to America while you wait to be served. The Institute realized the importance of "education while you eat" and has designed a table placemat to compete with the usual "chianti and bread" placemat. Special arrangements have been made with a manufacturer and production on the placemats has begun. Although the mat will be printed in red, white and green we have reproduced it in black and white on the opposite page.

You can order the mats, in bulk, through Jon Friedman of BFK Sales (800) 843-0933 or (201) 290-1180.

The Italians: The Classic Heritage

This is a long overdue documentary film that finally tells the story of the origin of the Italian people. No, Italy did not begin at the fall of the Roman Empire. In fact, the regions of Italy were joined one year before the unification of China!

The Institute was concerned enough about what people don't know about the Italians that it decided to start at the beginning.

The 30-minute film will debut in 1991 and is expected to be shown on cable and broadcast television.

The Gifts of Italy

Soon to be released for the general reading public is a book that is guaranteed to surprise you about Italy's countless contributions to civilization. Written in an easy-to-read format by Institute Governor Carl Pescosolido and Ms. Pamela Gleason, this work will be a standard for everyone interested in the roots of our modern society. Advance orders can be made through the Institute. Price and delivery date will be available shortly.

The Romanization of Harvard

Again, through the efforts and resources of Institute Governor Carl Pescosolido, Harvard University will carry a course in Roman Civilization in its core curriculum. Mr. Pescosolido is a graduate of Harvard and it has been his lifelong wish to establish a course for America's future leaders that will inculcate in them the spirit of the Italo/Roman tradition. The course is taught by Prof. Richard Tarrant.



Media Madness

[In which we present media material with commentary]

Don't Celebrate 1492

By Hans Koning

T NEW HAVEN, Conn. throughout the country, groups are organizing counter-celebrations of the quincentennial of the year 1492. They are preparing to counteract the official celebrations of the 500th anniversary of Columbus's landing in the Americas. A New York group, tentatively called Columbus in Context, had its first meeting last month. This is our opening statement:

We are not spoilsports. We are not out to spoil innocent fun, happy parading, dressing up in old costumes and selling Santa Maria souvenirs. However, the fun is not innocent. "You are spoiling the pleasure of our children," a woman said to an American Indian who was demonstrating outside a 1992 exhibition already cir-

Hans Koning is a novelist and essayist.

culating in the Southeast. That event is called "First Encounter." The miserable truth is the first encounters on the islands quickly led to last encounters of the Caribbean, a destroyed within two generations. Spanish discoverers. Not one of which was supposedly a prime motive of those voyages. They died with honor of the Redeemer and twelve Apostles," according to original Spanish documents. They had their hands cut off they did not bring in their quota of gold dust. Their chief roasted on fires of green wood their cries kept the Spaniards, they were silenced with wood put over their tongues. Ten after the first landing, the misanthropic native survivors started killing themselves by eating poisoned roots. Yes, Christopher Columbus was a European to sail to America in 1492. But Columbus into modern sequence of greed, cr-

Item: "DON'T CELEBRATE 1492—MOURN IT" (an essay by novelist Hans Koning appearing in a number of newspapers)

Comment: Hans Koning has found a way to get the attention of the media by Columbus-bashing. Arriving at the conclusion that the early explorers of America were ruthless thieves, he feels that we should not consider Columbus' voyage as a positive step in the history of mankind.

History is what it is, Herr Koning. Columbus was a 15th Century man with that century's values. The 1992 Quincentennial is not to celebrate or mourn Columbus' victory over the cannibals of the West Indies, but to remember that the Italian navigator first joined the world's two hemispheres together.

Item: *Newsday*, Long Island's "warrior" newspaper, felt compelled to assess the character of an Arab nation with the headline, "Saudi People Not Warriors at Heart."

Comment: Staff writer Patrick J. Sloyan, author of the piece, has fallen into the old trap of judging people by stereotype. Some may recall the familiar refrain during World War II when the Italians "didn't have that stomach" for a fight. The whole distasteful argument presupposes that every other nation is Conan the Barbarian, which ain't necessarily so.

Saudi People Not Warriors at Heart

By Patrick J. Sloyan

From Saudi Arabia... (text continues with commentary on Saudi Arabia's military and political situation, mentioning the Saudi Arabian National Guard and the Saudi Arabian Air Force.)



Washington, June 10 (AP)—The Saudi Arabian National Guard... (text continues with commentary on the Saudi Arabian National Guard and the Saudi Arabian Air Force.)



Item: Mr. and Mrs. Charles Scorsese had small parts in son Martin's new film, *Goodfellas*. Mom played main character Joe Pesci's Italian mamma while dad did a walk-on.

Comment: We know that Mom and Dad are proud of their son's work. But were they proud to be Italian after seeing the movie they helped to make?

Item: LaToya Jackson explains that her facial bruises were the result of a beating she received by "roughnecks" in Italy.

Comment: Rumor has it that the roughnecks may well have been Italian plastic surgeons. LaToya, you see, is not a natural type.





Media Madness

Item: A new action game for kids.

Comment: How would B'nai B'rith respond to a children's board game called *Matzoh Ball Monopoly* with a Hassidic man on the cover? Do you think the Hispanic community would welcome something with the name *Jumping Frejoles, Jose!* and a fat Mexican peasant character on display? Italians, however, are being asked to accept a new game called *Ready, Set, Spaghetti*. This latest mangling of the Italian people is replete with buffonish spaghetti vendor and ethnic derision in the extreme. Worse yet, it exposes an entirely new generation to the vulgarities of stereotyping. Toys are now being used to taint tots. Watch out Mario and Luigi!



Item: The subject cartoon was added to a reader's letter in the *New York Times* rebutting another reader's opinion that Italians have become cold and uncaring. The second reader, an Italian-American, wrote to assure the first reader that talk about the "new" Italian insensitivity was just press hype. The second reader's points were well taken. However, the cartoon reflected deeper feelings on the part of the *Times*.

Comment: When the *New York Times* isn't digging up some quaint unpleasantness about Italy, or completely forgetting it during stories of global economics, it sometimes likes to fondly recall an older image.

We suppose the drawing made by Campbell Laird conveys a logical concept, to wit, that Italians are still thoughtful and kind. However, the drawing conjures up the editors nostalgic perception of Italy. "Shine 'em up, Giuseppe."

Item: "...a friend who recently took a vacation to Italy [said], 'God, it was wonderful. Everybody was driving the wrong way down one-way streets.'" Michael & Jennifer Meyer (*Newsweek*: July 30, 1990)

Comment: This article started off as a lampoon of something else (i.e., German overefficiency) and, as usual, ended up making Italians look like buffoons. Believe what you will but admit that even Americans exaggerate a bit. Of course, the whole thing is meant as a compliment, right?





News of the Institute

FROM THE QUARRIES OF CARRARA

Plenary Council member Frank Ferrante of Ferran Enterprises, donated a specially crafted marble wheel superimposed with the Italic Studies logo to the Institute. The wheel was created at the quarry of Mario Tedeschi, Ferrante's Italian partner. In a presentation made at the annual dinner dinner last May, Ferrante urged Institute President John Mancini to permanently install the marble logo in suitable headquarters. Mancini replied that Institute headquarters must await the development of films and other programs, but promised to proudly display a smaller version of the logo on his desk.



(l to r) Frank Ferrante, Carl Borsari, John Mancini, Marlo Tedeschi



The 1990-91 Aurora class

YOUTH WILL BE SERVED

The *Aurora*™ youth program began its 4th year at Cellini Lodge (Sons of Italy) in New Hyde Park, Long Island. Not just another Italian language class, *Aurora* is specially designed for 5th and 6th grade students to whet their appetite for Italic Studies.

In this final year of field-testing *Aurora* will soon find its way around the Metro New York area. The Plenary Council has allocated \$7,000 toward the production of mass-produced games and crafts so that the program can be packaged for "export".

The simple logic behind *Aurora* (Italian for "dawn") is to create demand for Italian language in the public school system. Children who are exposed to Italian before Spanish will generally pursue it later in junior high (if offered). The secret is to introduce it to them without pain. In that, *Aurora* has no equal.

JOINT CONFERENCE OF THREE COUNCILS

In an unprecedented meeting, the Board of Governors met with the Executive Council and representatives of the Plenary Council to discuss changes in the constitution and goals of the Institute.

A motion was drafted for a change in the mail-in voting requirement for passage. Currently, a majority of all Plenary Council members is needed. The change will allow passage with only a majority of those votes returned. The Governors are expected to pass the constitutional amendment.

The Plenary Council meeting format will be revised to allow for more social exchange and guest speakers. Also, meetings will be conducted less frequently and at varying hours.

A concerted effort to establish a network of restaurants which will distribute the newsletter to its customers will be made. *The Italic Way* has already secured nine restaurants in Manhattan for this system. An individual will be retained to coordinate distribution and restocking.

The Project Italia film received strong backing and there will be an all-out effort to complete it by the spring of 1991.



PROFILES

(Reprinted from Parade Magazine)

'A Simple Deed With Awesome Power'

by Michael Ryan

"All right," the old man finally says, as a drizzly Northern Italian afternoon turns into evening. "I will tell you the story of the twins. But I will tell you not because my story is important but because it is important that the world understands what happened in those days.

"I went down to the train station in Budapest, not to the passenger area but to the loading docks. There were hundreds of people collected there, and when the trains came, the Nazis would put them into cattle cars to deport them to Germany. These were more or less the same kinds of cars I used to transport animals in my business, but they would cram people in, 40 to a car. These were not only Hungarian Nazis, by the way — the German SS were also there.

"At one point, in this long line of people, I saw two children about 12 years old. They looked exactly the same, like twins. I took an instant liking to them. I thought, 'I can't let them go.' So I said to them, 'You see that big black car over there? Go to that car, open the door and get in. The driver knows what to do.'

They ran and got in. Then an officer of the SS, a major, went to the car and started to take them back. I planted myself in front of him and said, 'No! This car is extraterrito-



Giorgio Perlasca. Honored by the U.S. Holocaust Council

rial. It has diplomatic immunity. Look at the diplomatic license plates! Look at the flag of Spain!' (cont'd on p. 26)

Institute (cont'd)

THIRD COIN IN THE SERIES

Continuing the commemorative coin series of Italian history, the Plenary Council has allocated funds to mint the third bronze and silver coins for 1991-92 recording the contributions of Italic civilization. While a final design has not been completed, the coin will feature the themes of Exploration and Humanism. The obverse will depict the four great Italian explorers (Colombo, Caboto, Vespucci, Verrazzano) and the reverse will feature a Renaissance theme.

Previous coins commemorate the Roman unification of Italy, the *Pax Romana* (Altar of Peace), and Italian commerce and scholarship in the Middle Ages. See our coin ad elsewhere in the newsletter.



**Ara Pacis Augustae
(Altar of Augustan Peace)**

ALTAR OF PEACE: 2,000TH ANNIVERSARY

We presented a plaque at the bimillennial of its consecration in 1987. This January 30, 1991 will mark the 2,000th anniversary of its completion and dedication. The Plenary Council asked Council member Dennis Mancini to visit the monument in Rome this past October to see if our plaque was hung. No dice. However, he did receive assurances that the bronze tablet cast in three languages (Latin, Italian, and English) would grace the walls once restoration work is completed.

The Altar was built to mark the start of the famous *Pax Romana* (Roman Peace). It also represents the completion of the first unification of Italy. The monument has been adopted by the Institute as the focus of the Italian heritage.



Perlasca, (Continued from p. 25)

"But he insisted. He wanted those kids. He pulled out his pistol and began to threaten me. Raoul Wallenberg came over and said to him, 'Hey, watch what you're doing. This man is a representative of the Spanish government. This is a diplomatic car.'

The SS major said, 'You're interfering with my job.'

"My next words just leaped out of the bottom of my heart. 'You call this a job?' I said.

"The Nazi got more and more angry. The Swiss diplomat Karl Lutz came over and Monsignor Angelo Rotta, the papal nuncio. And we were all shouting and screaming. Then an SS colonel came up and said, 'What's going on?' The major explained, and finally the colonel just said, 'Let them go. Their time will come.' The Nazis went away, and I got the kids. Then I turned to Wallenberg and said, 'Who was that man?'

"Wallenberg looked at me, surprised, and said, 'You don't know? That was Adolf Eichmann.'"

For three months, from October 1944 to January 1945, Giorgio Perlasca, acting as a Spanish diplomat, helped to place thousands of Budapest's Jews under the Spanish government's protection. Historians say that he personally saved about 5200 people and indirectly may have saved 5000 more. For the last six weeks of that time, he acted as Spain's top diplomat in Hungary, confronting the country's cabinet ministers, the generals of the occupying German army and the Nazi thugs who roamed the streets as he battled desperately to save lives. But, as he recalls those times, he always comes back to the two children he rescued from the cattle car. They

were among the first people Perlasca saved from the Nazis, and, as he remembers now, they were not what they seemed. When he took them back to the Spanish legation's villa and they took off their coats and hats, he was astonished to find that they were not identical twins, as he had thought. "One was a boy, and one was a girl — they were brother and sister — but they looked incredibly alike," he recalls, chuckling about how his eyes had been deceived.

There was an appropriate irony in the fact that Perlasca started his lifesaving work by mistaking these children for something they weren't. After all, Perlasca himself was not what he appeared. He wasn't a diplomat. He wasn't even Spanish. He was an Italian meat importer who accidentally found himself an eyewitness to one of the greatest atrocities in human history and decided to do whatever one man could to stop it.

Giorgio Perlasca is still ramrod-straight at 80, although a slight stroke has left him with a shamble in his gait. Even now, his voice thunders with authority. But his modesty is legendary. He hates to talk about himself. His story has been almost unknown in Europe and, until now, never told in this country — in part because he wanted it that way. Today, as he lives out his days in humble retirement in a modest section of Padua, near Venice, others have started to tell the world his story. As the Hungarian poet Eva Lang — who owes her life to Perlasca — told me, "I would call him the greatest hero of this era."

You cannot speak of heroism, or courage, with Giorgio Perlasca; he dismisses such talk impatiently. "There's an Italian saying, 'It's the opportunity that makes a thief,'" Perlasca tells me. "I had opportunity, and I took it." He says it with a shrug, dismissing his own actions as if anyone else



The round-up of Hungarian Jews, 1944. Inset: Giorgio Perlasca in 1943, a meat-buyer for the Italian Army.



would have done likewise. But what he did was breathtaking.

Giorgio Perlasca was the Budapest representative of a company in Rome that supplied meat to the Italian army. After Mussolini was first overthrown in 1943 and Italy turned against its former German allies, some of the Italians in Hungary were interned. But Perlasca had been a soldier in the Italian army that fought for Franco in the Spanish Civil War. He carried with him a document he had been given when he left Spain, entitling him to seek protection in any Spanish embassy, anywhere in the world, "I went to the Spanish legation and told the minister, Angel Sanz-Briz, that he should give me a passport," Perlasca remembers. "He gave me a regular diplomatic passport that day."

the stairs and melted snow for drinking water in some buildings that had no plumbing. Perlasca used his own meager savings to buy them whatever food he could find. But at least they were alive.

Working with Otto Komoly, a leader of the underground Jewish resistance, and other resistance leaders, Perlasca also provided safe-passes to Jewish children whose parents already had been rounded up.

In late November, disaster struck. Sanz-Briz — the last legal representative of Spain remaining in Budapest — had to leave the country. "I didn't know what to do next,"

What Giorgio Perlasca did was a dangerous deception and it saved 10,000 lives.

While the paperwork was being processed, Perlasca noticed that hundreds of people had lined up outside the Spanish legation. Some of them were fighting to get inside. He learned that the people were Jews, asking for protection. Sanz-Briz in a humanitarian act that violated every principle of diplomacy, had begun issuing false documents called letters of protection — papers that said the bearer was entitled to Spanish citizenship and was under the protection of the Spanish government. His hope was that the Nazi government of Hungary, which valued its relations with Madrid, would acknowledge the documents and leave their bearers alone. Sanz-Briz gave a letter of protection to anyone who could get to his office and ask for one.

On his way to the legation that morning, Perlasca had witnessed an atrocity that changed the way he thought about life. "I saw some Hungarian Nazis," he recalls. "They were chasing a little boy, about 10 years old. They caught up with him, and one of them took his gun and bashed the child's head in. They killed him. I asked people there why, and they answered, 'Because he was a Jewish child.'" Perlasca was horrified. When he heard that the Spanish legation was trying to save Jewish lives, he instantly volunteered to help.

One of Perlasca's first jobs was to go to the railroad yard. The previous day, a group of Hungarian Nazis had rounded up some Jews who had Spanish letters of protection. The Hungarian government admitted its mistake, but Perlasca personally had to find the victims and rescue them from the SS.

As October faded into November in 1944, Perlasca busied himself finding places to put all the holders of Spanish letters of protection. But the end of the year, he had filled 11 apartment houses with Jews, hanging the flag of Spain from each building and serving notice on the Nazi government that the occupants were protected by Madrid. But the year's end, he had crammed 5200 people into these houses. They slept on

Perlasca recalls, "so I decided to go check all the houses we had. The police were already in one of them, and I saw that the Jewish people were getting ready to leave. So I locked the front door and had a face-off with the officer in charge. I told him he would be using violence against a diplomat if he attempted to take those people out." Perlasca and the officer went outside, where Hungarian government officials were waiting. One of them told Perlasca that, since Sanz-Briz had left the country, diplomatic relations with Spain were ended and the residents of Spanish houses no longer were protected. Without thinking twice, Perlasca says, he invented his dangerous, magnificent lie:

"I said, 'The legation is still in business. Sanz-Briz has gone to Switzerland for a diplomatic conference. The flag is still flying. I am in charge. I am the legal representative of Spain.'" The Hungarians, confused, agreed to allow the Jews to remain in Perlasca's houses temporarily. "Just then, I saw a line of Jews in the street," he adds. "I realized that they were mine, from another house at Pannonia Street 44. I said to the officials, 'These people are mine. I want them back.'" The Hungarians backed down. Suddenly, Perlasca was Spain's new charge d'affaires in Budapest — nominated and confirmed by himself and recognized by the government of Hungary.

Part of the reason his scheme worked was the man himself. Even today, he has a John Wayne kind of presence — tall, determined, forceful. Back then, at 34, he was a power to be reckoned with. Edith Weiss, who still lives in Budapest, was a young girl in the house on Pannonia Street. She will never forget what Perlasca was like.

"It happened often in those days that the Hungarian Nazis would come and march Jews down to the Danube and kill them there and throw their bodies into the river," she recalls. "One day they came and took us downstairs and were



Perlasca (cont'd from previous page)

going to march us to the river. But Perlasca arrived. He was mesmerizing. In this forceful, powerful way of his, he told them to go away and leave us alone. The leader of the Nazi group was so stunned, he couldn't even talk. Perlasca had such an authority. They simply went away.

I kept asking Perlasca why he, an Italian Catholic, chose to risk his life to save Hungarian Jews he had never met. He could never quite come up with an answer. He spoke of growing up with Jewish friends, of the Jewish men he served with in the Italian army, of parents who raised him to respect others. "I simply cannot understand why a man can be persecuted because he is of a different religion than mine," he says.

Michael Berenbaum, a theologian who is project director of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., has thought long and hard about the question. "The good is simple," he says. "It's not something heroic or extraordinary, it's just a simple deed done with a certain naivete. That's its awesome power." No hero was ever a simpler man than Giorgio Perlasca.

"On January 14th, 1945, Perlasca came to our house for the last time," recalls the poet Eva Lang. "He said, 'The Russians are in the city now. You don't have to be afraid. You don't need me anymore.' And then he left."

After the war, the new Communist government of Hungary had little desire to talk about the Holocaust. In Italy, also, the subject was avoided. Giorgio Perlasca never sought publicity, never wrote a book, never told the world what he had done. The people he saved never heard how he was captured by the Soviets and briefly put to work cleaning the streets of rubble and corpses and later was deported to Istanbul in a cattle car. How he found his way back to Italy, where his former employer refused him back pay. How he even was held

personally liable for a car that had been destroyed when the Spanish legation was bombed — and paid for it with most of what was left of his own money. "It was hard" is all he will say of the last 45 years, during which he and his wife raised a son while Perlasca worked at whatever jobs he could find.

The world changed again, however, and three years ago some of those whom Perlasca had saved finally tracked him down. Through their efforts, he was named an honorary citizen of Israel and given Hungary's highest civilian award for valor. A few of them have raised money for a modest monthly stipend for their rescuer, who lives in a walkup flat in Padua. [In September of this year] Perlasca [visited] America for the first time, to be honored by the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council.

When the Holocaust Museum in Washington is completed in three years, visitors will be able to walk through a series of displays that illustrate the unspeakable. They will follow the experience of Holocaust victims, walking through a cattle car and the replica of a door leading to a crematorium as they learn about what happened. By the end of the display, many visitors will feel shattered.

But then they will walk into an area of light and space where a separate display will tell a different story: It will illustrate the deeds of Raoul Wallenberg, and of the people of Le Chambon in France, who sheltered 500 Jewish children in their homes, and it will tell the story of Giorgio Perlasca. "By then, people will need to know about Perlasca," Michael Berenbaum says. But Giorgio Perlasca is more than just a museum exhibit.

We all need to know about Giorgio Perlasca.

Reprinted from Parade Magazine, August 19, 1990. (Suggested to The Italic Way by member Robert Garbarini)

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