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THE Italic Way

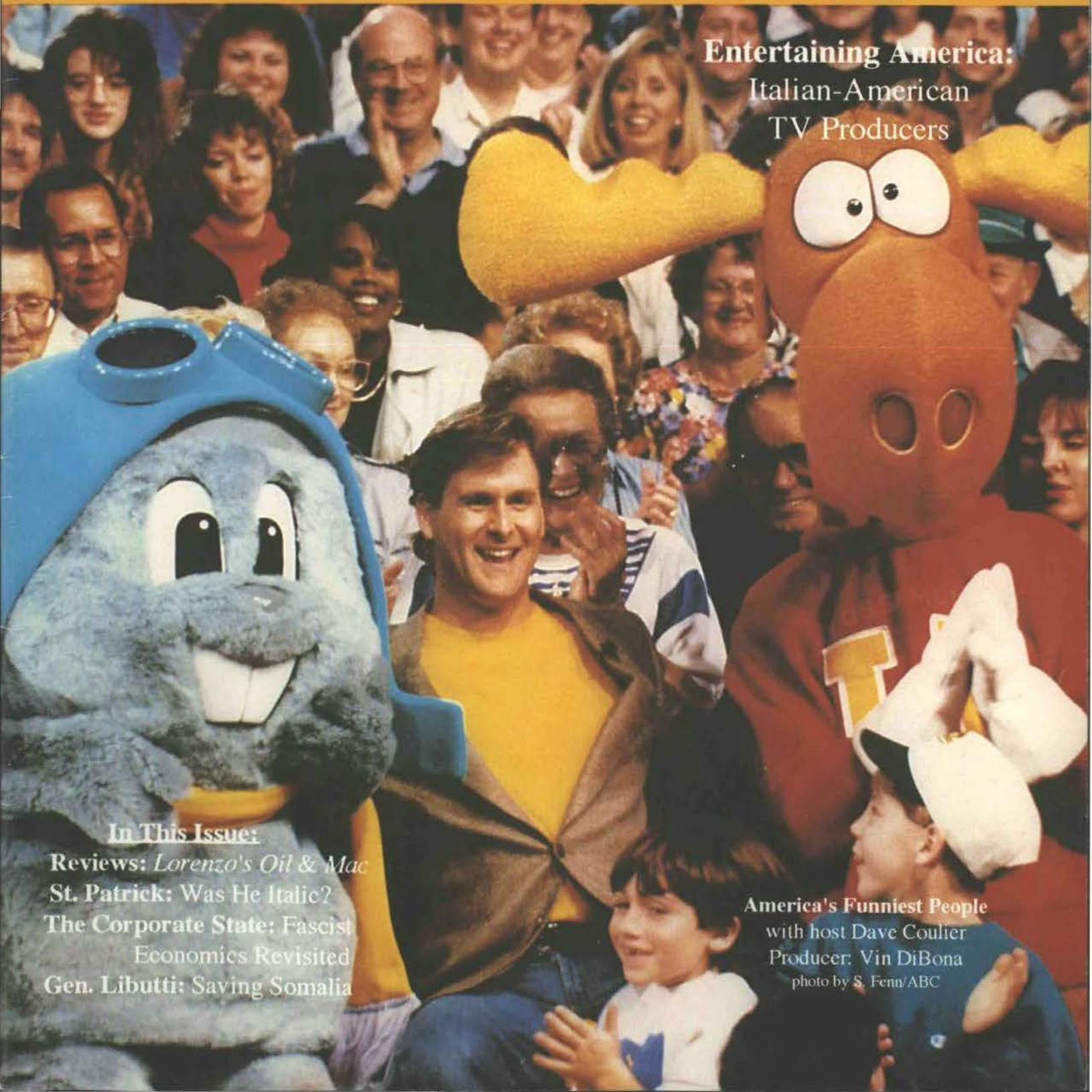
The newsletter of the Italic Studies Institute

Entertaining America:
Italian-American
TV Producers

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Reviews: *Lorenzo's Oil & Mac*
St. Patrick: Was He Italic?
The Corporate State: Fascist
Economics Revisited
Gen. Libutti: Saving Somalia

America's Funniest People
with host Dave Coulier
Producer: Vin DiBona
photo by S. Fenn/ABC





Vol. 5 No. 3

The Italic Way

MCMXCIII

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Letters

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



Did the Inaugural poetess forget America's 5th largest minority?

Are you not bound to love them as you love yourselves? ..."

It is clear that Columbus was the one who started this endless cycle of slavery and genocide. The words of Fray Montesinos [are] an example of one of the standards of the time.

Joseph S. Bruno
Carmichael, CA

(Ed. Our point was that inhumanity was not a uniquely Latin sin. Try to find a similiar quote from the Anglo-Saxon or Native American side.)

Tragedy of Columbus

I am pleased to send in my payment for the subscription to your interesting newsletter. I have reviewed most of the Italian-American publications and chose yours because all the others seemed to be for "old fogeys." Your publication seems to be free of the Anglo-Saxon Puritanical influences that seems to afflict the other Italian-American publications.

However, I must express my disagreement with one article in the Spring/Summer issue on Columbus. I would like to quote one Fray Anton de Montesinos (a Catholic priest and

definitely not an Anglo-Saxon). In his Advent sermon of 1511, he thundered at his congregation of colonists:

"Tell me, by what right or justice do you hold these Indians in such a cruel and horrible servitude? On what authority have you waged such detestable wars against these peoples, who dwell quietly and peacefully on their own land? ... [destroying] infinite numbers of them by homicides and slaughters never before heard of? ... Are these not human beings?"

At Last!

I wish to express my utter joy at having found out about your publication. Finally, there is a publication about Italian-Americans that is not only accurate, but enjoyable and focused on the proper issues.

Frank Prestia,
Roslyn Heights, NY

Italian Warts

Your anti-defamation stance appears overly sensitive. You criticized Spike Lee's *Jungle Fever* which I have recently viewed. Although I now live in California, I grew up in Bedford-

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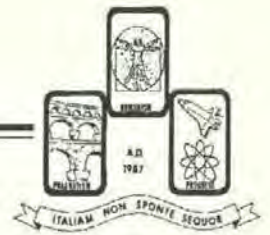
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LETTERS

Stuyvesant. I remember how parochial our urban villages were. Lee's depiction of the Italians in Bensonhurst represented a legitimate, if narrow, perspective of people frightened by what they do not know.

Before we hold up shields to protect the Italian image from unfair abuse, we must look at our warts and flaws. It takes courage to admit that we are not perfect.

**Vincenza Scarpaci,
Petaluma, CA**

(Ed. A boy named Siegel bashed a black athlete's head with a bat in the non-Italic town of Atlantic Beach, Long Island. Boys named Lester, Riley and Kern ran a black man to his death in Howard Beach. The point is that not only Italian-Americans have warts. They just seem to get the cinematic blame.)

Overlooked Americans

I listened to Ms. Maya Angelou's inaugural poem [at President Clinton's Inauguration], and she listed almost every group from A to Z, but the word "Italian" was missing. Included among the many were the Turk, the Arab, the Swede, the Eskimo, the Scot, the

It's about discrimination against Italian-Americans.... the largest single case against any public institute in the country.

Ashanti, the Yoruba, the Kru, the French, the Greek, etc., BUT NOT THE ITALIAN!

Italian-Americans earned what they have. And to have them excluded from this poem annoys me beyond words for this slight of Italian-Americans.

**John Messina,
E. Williston, NY**

(Ed. - We might also add that Americans of Italian descent are the 5th largest ethnic group in the U.S., right behind the African-Americans, and difficult to overlook.)

Denouncing Negatives

You are to be commended for taking out an ad in the *New York Newsday* to

attack the "systematic vilification of Americans of Italian origin in some sectors of our society." If all Americans of Italian origin would pull together, this continual attack would vanish.

**Anne M. Baccari,
Wynnewood, PA**

Confronting the System

(Ed. The following is an update on the suit brought against the City University of New York [CUNY] by the Italian-American faculty protesting discrimination. Excerpted from the Staten Island Advance, March 23, 1993.)

This is not about Joe Scelsa or the Calendra Institute. It's about discrimination against Italian-Americans. It is the largest class-action suit filed in the city Dept. of Labor and the largest single case against any public institute in the country. This is our Brown against the Board of Education.

**Philip Foglia,
Chief Counsel
for the Defense**

(Forty-three members of the CUNY faculty will be subpoenaed. The trial is scheduled for October 18th. Dr. Joseph Scelsa is a member of the Plenary Council.)

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Architects for the restoration of the Italian Consulate



All'Italiana



Gov. James Florio, center, examines a weapon with State Attorney General Robert Del Tufo and James Brady, a national advocate of gun control. Florio led the victory over the NRA in his state.

NRA OUTGUNNED

He is a lean, mean one-man political clean-up machine. He is the two-fisted, no-gun governor of New Jersey, Jim Florio. And he has beaten those no-good varmints of the NRA at their own game. Like an Italic Gary Cooper in *High Noon*, Governor Florio was outnumbered by these slick lobbyists who have for too long made possession of firearms a patriotic duty. But the gun-slingers got too cocky when they tried to recruit the state legislature's Republicans to reverse Florio's 1990 ban on assault weapons. The rational Republican president of the New Jersey Senate,



The South of Italy is finding oil in "them thar hills".

Don DiFrancesco, in the end stood by the governor. Together, they marshalled the forces of reason to outgun the well-funded NRA hitmen. New Jersey, the state with the greatest proportion of Italian-Americans, has earned the respect of all law abiding Americans.

SCRAP HEAP

Italy's Fiat is leading the world's auto-makers in developing a large scale system of automobile recycling. Combining a mass "deproduction" technique and the use of new technologies which multiply the afterlife uses of materials, Fiat plans on demonstrating its system on 25,000 cars this September. One technique in particular can convert 12-year-old bumpers into auto air ducts for a time and then auto floor coverings. The Italians will give new meaning to the term "old heap".

DI LORENZO'S LIGHT

When violence, racism and neo-Nazism threatened to plunge Germany into a bloody reign of terror, one man saw the light. Giovanni di Lorenzo, a newspaper reporter, television host and resident of Germany, suggested to his adopted countrymen at a dinner one evening a way to counter the evil-doers. The result was thousands of decent Germans taking to the streets, candlelights in hand, in a show of support for tolerance and democratic ideals. How ironic that even now as we approach the new millenium, Italic reason still influences the Teutonic soul.

LAMBORGHINI LIVES ON

With the passing of Ferruccio Lamborghini at age 89, the automotive world has lost one of its most dynamic and innovative pioneers. And Italy has lost an entrepreneurial titan. Although born of humble origins on a farm near Ferrara, Lamborghini became synony-



Among America's mosaic of ethnic groups, Italian Americans are the 5th largest. However, just how much strength is in their numbers?

mous with style, sophistication, high-tech, and avant-garde automobiles. He built cars for the gliterati and, along

All'Italiana



with Ferrari, came to represent Italian automotive excellence. With his innate Italic inventiveness, Lamborghini demonstrated that one man's genius can create extraordinary things.

UP THE ITALOS!

They certainly don't act it, but Italian-Americans are #5 in ethnic population according to the 1990 census. Ten years ago they were in the eighth position with 12 million souls. Today, there are 15 million Americans who claim to be Italic as a first or second ancestry. As for the others, the Irish lost ground by five million and the English by seven million. Who's on top? The Germans, of course, up by six million.

German.....58 million
Irish.....39 million
English.....33 million
Afro-Am...24 million
Italian.....15 million
Mexican....12 million
French.....10 million
Polish.....9 million
Am. Ind.....9 million
Dutch.....6 million
Scot-Irish.....6 million

HIV ASSAULTED

ABC-TV's premiere news-journal show *Day One* in March reported new doubts surfacing about HIV as the cause of AIDS. Under attack by the "left-wing" rebels are Dr. Anthony Fauci, the master strategist in the war on AIDS, and Dr. Robert Gallo, co-developer of the HIV blood test. The rebels cannot understand why some people who are HIV-positive remain alive beyond the expected lifespan. Fauci and Gallo are being accused of misdirecting AIDS research. While Fauci calmly disposed of the counter arguments, Gallo abruptly walked off the ABC interview condemning *Day One* for disservice to the public.



Germany's anti-hate demonstrations were inspired by an Italian.

In support of the Fauci/Gallo position comes the discovery by a University of Minnesota researcher, Dr. Ashley Haase, that the HIV virus can be dormant for many years in the victim's lymph nodes. This revelation once more appears to confirm the Fauci/Gallo position.

Dr. Anthony Fauci of the National Institute of Allergy & Infectious Diseases faces criticism of his AIDS fight.



BASILICATA BONANZA

Italy's position as the fourth or fifth most powerful economy on earth is even more amazing when you consider that such a status was achieved without the benefit of appreciable natural resources. Despite political setbacks, Italy ranks as one of the planet's premiere success stories. So, the news that its poorest region, Basilicata, is the source of a significant oil field will surely bolster the nation's economy. Italy's petroleum group, *Agip*, is optimistic that by 1994 production from six wells—along with a gas separation plant—will help close the gap in the nation's energy requirements. ****



A classic Lamborghini



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.]

ENGLAND'S OTHER SIDE

In England, where historical truth seems optional rather than mandatory, some sobering revelations are just now coming to light. After 53 years of government suppression, documents detail the official cooperation of English leaders in the round up of local Jews on Nazi-occupied Guernsey Island. Community leaders of that Channel island, the only British territory captured by the Germans in the Second War World, as-



What happened to the native people of Tasmania?

sisted in the identification and location of the island's five Jewish women. This occurred at the very time that Germany's ally, Italy, protected European Jews from Nazi and Vichy French brutality.

In the deeper past, Professor Jered Diamond of the UCLA School of Medicine writes hauntingly of the English extermination of Tasmanian civilization. This hidden holocaust began in the late 1700s and continued until 1876, when the last Tasmanian, a woman called Truganini, died. Atrocities abounded. For example, a Tasmanian women would be forced to "wear the

Hungarians are taking an Italian aviation partner.



head of her freshly murdered husband on a string around her neck." Professor Diamond's piece in the March issue of *Discover* magazine sheds an altogether different light on imperial Britain's colonists: "The first Europeans that Tasmanians saw were escaped convicts—the most brutalized members of brutal British society."

PAN-EUROPEAN FUNK

That pillar of the Atlantic community, France, is being rocked by hard times and ever-widening scandals. Hard-pressed farmers and fisherman are up in arms over the new European open markets. President Mitterand's Socialists have been toppled at the polls, and accusations of graft have disgraced the former Prime Minister. Worse, a moral scandal has called into question the misplaced chauvinism of government health officials. Resisting the use of the American version of the HIV blood test developed

by Dr. Robert Gallo, French officials allowed the distribution of HIV-infected blood to hemophiliacs while awaiting a French version of the blood test.

But what must be the most appalling of revelations is that French officials were still billing various departments (regions) as late as 1946 for transporting their Jews to Germany during the war, which ended in 1945. This and other wartime collaboration are set to rock the French conscience for years to come.

Germany, too, is once again waging the economic equivalent of war. The nation is stretched to its limits trying to absorb its hardscrabble Eastern regions. Despite precise statistical predictions of total integration of the two Germanies within 3 or 4 years, experts now concede the process may take at least a generation. Over 4 million east German workers lost their jobs since the reunification, giving that part of the



Ever the idealists, Italians are demanding honest politics.

World Notes



country a whopping 30% unemployment rate. Is it any wonder that Germans comprise the largest foreign group residing in the United States, some 1.5 million?

And Russia? Don't ask.

recently as last year, Kanemaru was considered Japan's most powerful politician. That's before the authorities discovered he had a yen for money—and then some. An official investigation uncovered \$50 million in cash and gold

IRAQ & HUNGARY

Fiat of Italy has received United Nations' approval to sell \$130 million of farm equipment to the beleaguered Iraqis. This sale does not compromise the current sanctions imposed during the Persian Gulf War.

Alitalia has purchased a 30% stake in the Hungarian state air line Malev. Although a good business move, the acquisition has political advantages for the Italians. Italy is embarking on a strategy to take the lead in Balkan and East European affairs. With auto factories in Poland, humanitarian programs in Albania, and extensive dealings in Rumania and the former Yugoslav nations, the Italians will balance Germany's historic role in eastern Europe. In fact, Alitalia outfoxed Lufthausa to win the Malev deal.

The English and French reflect on the Holocaust.



SUSHI SHAKEDOWN

Sung to the tune of that classic television series, *Car 54*, here is a summary of the state of Japanese politics:

There's a scandal in Nippon. The Diet's broken out in fights.

The Yakuza's killing people and rigging election nights.

The economy's in self-destruction and there are kickbacks in construction.

Shin Kanemaru, where are you?

In jail! In addition to his links to the Japanese mob, disgraced political king-maker Shin Kanemaru has been indicted on two new counts of tax fraud. As



Yakuza gangsters and political looting have gotten the Japanese aroused.

bars in the nooks and crannies of his crooked home. This may be just the tip of the iceberg. Before long, Japan's mushrooming political scandals and institutionalized acceptance of the Yakuza may crack the entire ice palace that is Japan, Inc.

GRAFT ZITI

Italians call it *Tangentopoli* ("Kickback City). Most other democracies call it campaign funding. It has got the average Italian mad as hell. For decades, it has now been confirmed, the 28 or so political parties that replaced the Fascist Party have been raising money using the *quid pro quo* method of political shake-down. Most other democracies call it porkbarrel politics. Semantics aside, the Italian electorate is not amused, especially since they have been asked to accept more taxes and pay the highest gasoline fees in the world. The kickback scandal has become somewhat of a reign of terror with nearly every current and past politician awaiting his turn for the prosecutor's guillotine.

The smart money is on a Second Republic to tighten up the multi-party mess. (see our Editorial)

EMPEROR TRUMP

Feeling his imperial oats despite his sobering financial setbacks, entrepreneur Donald Trump is aching to fulfill his dream of building a Roman theme park in New Jersey.

No details are now available but the park will probably highlight the Caligula or Nero regimes rather than the more realistic but dignified Augustus administration. We who are about to pay the entrance fee can only hope for the best. ****



The Italic Way



Editorial

THEY JUST DON'T GET IT

It is said that the first way to cure a bad habit is to admit you have one. In the case of Italic stereotypes, it appears we shall never solve the problem for the simple reason that Hollywood's Italian-Americans do not believe there is a problem at all.

Our Focus article in this issue deals with Italian-American television producers. Although those interviewed do not necessarily promote stereotypes, most do not feel that stereotypes are an obsessive characteristic of the media.

Hollywood producers of Italian descent, like all of us, have many loyalties. Their heritage is but one, and one that doesn't put bread on the table. Their other loyalty, the one that pays the bills, is the Arts which demands a right to do or say anything. Like the National Rifle Association, media artists would ascribe to the questionable logic, "Stereotypes don't hurt people, people do." Curiously, we have observed that most Italian-American media artists avoid stereotyping other ethnic groups, possibly out of respect but more likely fear. Instead, they follow the old dictum of creativity, "write about what you know." Such an imperative brings with it a "license" to defame one's own. "Hey, it's all right. I'm Italian."

Our problem, then, is not stereotypes but rather the people who are obsessed with perpetuating them.

LESSONS LEARNED IN ITALY

The political tumult that is racking Italy has brought to light many characteristics of the nation and its First Republic.

1. Italians are perfectionists. If anyone on this planet thinks that his country has more honest government than the Italians, he is deluding himself. Human nature is, well, human. But Italians are not a people to stay dissatisfied very long. Western Civilization is, in no small way, a product of Italic striving for perfection.
2. Despite the Italian idiom, *fare una bella figura* (to cut a good figure), the Italian nation-state cares little for its political image. Scandals, plots, secret dealings, sensational headlines, and complaining in public have been a character trait of Italians since at least Roman times.
3. Not all the crooks in Italy are from the South. The *Tangentopoli* ("Kickback City") scandal now wrenching the republic began in Milan. Northern politicians and businessmen (Fiat among them) are the majority of those tarished.
4. The mafia is not an ingenious organization. It was proved by Mussolini and evident again today that organized crime is tacitly or actively supported by dishonest local politicians. Only a strong central government can deal with it.
5. The American press lacks any sense of logic or proportion in reporting about Italy. If you were to accept all the reporting and analyses dished out about Italy ("Shame of a Nation", "Twilight in Italy", "Moral Shambles", et. al.) you would be at a loss to explain why that nation is the fifth greatest economy.

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WRONG DIRECTION

Italian voters made known their desire for change in the April 18th national referendum. Among the eight propositions on the ballot was a change to winner-take-all rule for future Senate elections. This will begin to eliminate most of the 28 parties that have compromised government effectiveness. However, four of the propositions would increase regional autonomy. To attempt to make the central government more effective on the one hand, and then to emasculate it on the other, is not logical. Unfortunately, the electorate approved the contradiction. It will only fuel the forces of disunity.

Forum of the People



[The following article by Plenary Council member John Triboletti is in regard to our review, in the last issue, of the book *La Storia* by Jerre Mangione and Ben Morreale.]

I found Rosario Iaconis' review of *La Storia* to be largely misguided and astonishingly vitriolic. Although I surely understand some of the foundations for your criticism, much of the problem has to do with Italian history, the viewpoints of Italian immigrants toward Italian history, the role of the "mafia" in Italian life, and the self-image of contemporary Italian Americans.

Your statement, "In maligning and ignoring Rome, Mangione and Morreale betray a simplistic worldview that only underscores their paucity of knowledge," is not only a gross insult to two successful Italian American scholars and writers, but ludicrous in itself. Mangione and Morreale were not writing about Rome, but about Italian immigration to the Americas, a topic to which ancient Rome is totally irrelevant. The self-image of Italian immigrants had nothing to do with Rome, virtually nothing to do with "Italy," which they did not even perceive of as a nation, but everything to do with the regions and villages from which they came. I am amazed that you do not grasp the importance of such an obvious reality.

As to the issue of the "mafia," Mangione and Morreale make quite clear the fact that the "mafia," as presented by American media, government, and law enforcement organizations, simply does not exist.

La Storia is, over all, a very good book. It presents the spirit of the Italian people quite well. We have so much to be proud of in our accomplishments here, as opposed to in the land of Tiberius, Caligula, and Nero.

I think that, rather than tearing down Italian American writers and squabbling among ourselves as Italians so often tend to do, we should be working toward the common goal of empowerment. This cannot be done by creating a "politically correct" Italian American image, dictated to the masses by a particular "elite". Over-concern for images is, in any event, falling into the trap set by the American media. Italian reality is the substance of individualism, hard work, extraordinary talents, traditional value structures, and good singing voices.



John F. Triboletti, Ph.D.



The late A. Bartlett Giamatti

* * * * *

Dear Dr. Triboletti:

Are Italians a "race" of the damned? What other ethnic group would disavow a noble ancient heritage and start its history somewhere in the Middle Ages?

Greek-Americans speak reverently of Pericles, Aristotle and Plato. And you cannot argue with the results. Michael Dukakis and Paul Tsongas, not to mention Spiro Agnew, used the mystic chords of memory to evoke the Parthenon and Mt. Olympus. And they went for the brass ring. We, on the other hand, evoke the old hardscrabble life and build altars to it.

A. Bartlett Giamatti recognized our ancestral link to Rome in his commentary to Allon Schoener's tome, *The Italian-Americans*:

"The unlettered or barely literate who crowded the docks and decks, waiting to leave [Italy], would not have known *The Aeneid* and would not have believed they were affected by Roman culture... Yet the ideals of civic unity, liberty of individual choice and freedom from foreign oppression were, from Dante on, constantly articulated, and the core of these values, drawing on Roman principles, would later be carried at various levels of consciousness by travelers and later immigrants to the New World. There, it was thought in a thousand different ways, ancient promises might be kept. In important ways, though not in every way, those promises were kept."

Unfortunately, Dr. Giamatti is gone. And an unkind fate has left us with a different sort of "elite". One which lacks the understanding of the ancient forces that shaped us. Had the Jews relied on such scholars in 1948 — and before the Balfour Declaration — Williamsburgh not Jerusalem would be the capital of Israel.

Simply, we are the sum total of all our ancestors not just the last few poor generations.

R. Iaconis



REVIEW

Lorenzo's Oil

by John Mancini

You can count the number of positive movies about Italian-Americans on one hand and still have a couple of fingers left over to cover your nostrils to avoid the stench of the negative ones. Fortunately, *Lorenzo's Oil* can allow you to take a deep breath and thank God. Better yet, thank Him that no Italian-American filmmakers got their bloody hands on this true life story or it would have become a cross between *Moonstruck* and *Mean Streets*.

The story deals with the Odone family whose son Lorenzo inherits a fatal disease called adrenoleukodystrophy (ALD) from his maternal side. This devastating illness damages the male victim's nervous system and eventually

the brain. Lorenzo developed ALD at age 5 and was given no more than two years to live. That was in 1984. Lorenzo is now 14. In the interim, Lorenzo has had 400 nurses and his medical needs cost \$25,000 per month.

One cannot help but observe that Lorenzo's inner strength, sustaining him through his agony - he is quadriplegic, cannot speak, and lives on a feeding tube - is also inherited from his mom and dad. The Italian-born Augusto Odone and Irish-American Michaela

(continued p. 27)



Nick Nolte, Zack O'Malley, and Susan Sarandon as the Odone Family



MAC

by Rosario Iaconis

Frank Capra and Vincente Minelli were among Hollywood's most trailblazing directors. However, they never used their filmmaking skills to bring Italian-Americans to life on the big screen. Their films were cinematic and artistic triumphs, but did little to boost the image of the scions of Italy. Worse still, a spate of B movies in the late 1940s and 50s began portraying Italian neighborhoods as seedy urban havens for criminals, misanthropes and morons—the antithesis of clean-cut suburban America. Today, the situation has deteriorated further. Coppola and Scorsese have become the darlings of the media for their slanderous and incessant depictions of Italian-Americans.

Enter John Turturro. Previously known for his performances in Spike Lee's *Mo' Better Blues*, *Jungle Fever*, and *Do The Right Thing*, in which he played, in turn, a Jewish business agent, and not-

so-dumb Italian-Americans. Perhaps his tour of duty in Spike's vitriolic vehicles convinced Turturro to fulfill a lifelong cinematic dream to write and direct his own Italic statement.

Mac pays homage to John Turturro's father, a perfectionist. It is the fledgling director's paean of praise to a builder whom he feels was the embodiment of the Italian work ethic—a radical departure from mainstream movie stereotypes. Turturro is of the opinion that only Italian-American directors can do justice to their heritage. In an interview with the *New York Times*, he claims: "I've seen people try to make movies about us, which is fine. It can even be fun, but it's not our world."

Turturro's world, however, is hardly an Italic Eden. Turturro feels compelled to examine every grain of dirt under his family's fingernails. He gives new meaning to the phrase "true grit." We learn, for example, that urinating on callouses makes them smooth and rock hard. We also get a birdseye view of

(continued p. 28)

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**Institute Treasurer
George P. Ricci**

WANT TO BE RICH & GENEROUS?

The following is an interview with the Institute's Treasurer, George P. Ricci, an attorney and trust officer, about the tax benefits of charitable giving.

Q. Can you tell our readers what tax benefits there are to giving to the Italic Studies Institute?

A. Sure — the Institute is an IRS recognized tax-exempt charitable organization. As such, all contributions to the Institute qualify as charitable deductions for income tax purposes. We are considered a type of charity subject to the 50% limitation. This means, generally, that the deductibility of gifts to the Institute, along with any other gifts made during the year to such qualifying charities, are limited to 50% of your adjusted gross income. Your deduction could also be affected by the Alternative Minimum Tax, so you should always check before hand.

Q. Is cash the only way a contribution can be made?

A. No. In fact, if one has property, whether it is stock, bonds, real estate, etc. which has a low "tax cost basis," it may be beneficial to contribute the property instead of cash.

Q. Why?

A. As an example, suppose you wanted to gift \$10,000 to the Institute. You could give cash or, say, shares of XYZ Corporation held by you for more than a year and worth \$10,000 but which cost you only \$2,000. If you sold the stock you would have a capital gains tax — let's estimate it at 30% of the gain of \$8,000, the tax would then be \$2,400, leaving you with \$7,600. To make the full \$10,000 gift you'd have to take \$2,400 from your other funds. The better way would be to gift the shares themselves and you would claim a charitable deduction of their fair market value. Special limitations may apply, and you may have to produce documentation to support your deduction, so again, check with your tax adviser.

Q. Are there any other ways in which someone could achieve a tax benefit?

A. Yes, there are various arrangements. For example, a charitable Remainder Trust is a popular device used by many to make charitable contributions, claim a charitable deduction and yet retain some economic benefits of the property donated.

Q. I'd like to hear more about that!

A. It works like this. Let's say you still have that low tax cost basis stock in XYZ Corporation but now its worth \$100,000. Unfortunately, you're stuck with that \$2,000 cost basis and the stock pays only a 2% dividend. You'd like to make a charitable contribution, and would give the stock but you'd like to keep the income from it (or even get more income from it). As a solution, you can create a trust referred to as a Charitable Remainder Unitrust which provides for a certain payment to you during your lifetime. Upon your death, the trust terminates and is payable to the Institute. So, you gift the stock to the trust, retaining the right to a percentage of the fair market value of the property, let's say 7%. That would entitle you to receive \$7,000 annually from the trust. Here are the benefits: because this Charitable Remainder Trust is exempt from taxes, the XYZ Corporation stock can be sold in the trust without paying a capital gains tax and the proceeds reinvested in higher yielding securities — let's assume U.S. Government bonds paying 7-1/2%. Each year the trust would be re-valued and your 7% payment would change. For example, if in five years the trust is worth \$120,000, your 7% payout would be \$8,400. Furthermore, and yes this is hard to believe, you are entitled to a charitable deduction based on the value of the XYZ Corporation you donated, your life expectancy and certain rates determined by the IRS. Let's assume that given your age and the current applicable IRS rates, the remainder value of the trust is 30%. Therefore, you'd be entitled to a charitable deduction of \$30,000. Of course, the usual caveats about getting tax advice apply.

Q. This sounds like getting your cake and eating it too. Are these Charitable Remainder Trusts new devices?

A. Not at all. They have been around since 1969 and as long as the technical requirements of the Internal Revenue Code are followed, they work very well.

(Continued p. 19)

**The Charitable
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Focus

Entertaining America

by Michelle Delino and John Mancini

Like their counterparts in the arts and sciences, politics, law, academia, and numerous other fields, Italian American executives in the television industry are making their mark. From down home shows like *Hee Haw* to the *Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous* the fine Italian hand molds what the viewer will see. Yet, for all the variety in taste and type, one theme permeates them all. It is the human element. Bionics, machines, sci-fi tech are not the vehicles of these Italics. Instead, they explore the heights and depths of men and women, their realities but also their dreams and might-have-beens, sometimes in stark seriousness but also in good fun.

Among the producers of America's television entertainment are Vin DiBona, of *America's Funniest Home Videos* and *America's Funniest People*; Rocco Urbisci, of *The Whoopi Goldberg Show*; Sam Luvullo of *Hee Haw*; Don Bellisario, of *Quantum Leap*; Sonny Grosso of *Top Cops* and *Counterstrike*; Debra DiMaio, of *The Oprah Winfrey Show*; and Al Masini of *Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous* and creator of *Entertainment Tonight*.

Of course, it is fair to ask - what is a producer? In the simplest terms, it's the man or woman in overall charge of creating, filming, and broadcasting a television show. The creative content, the staffing, casting, production budgets, and timetables are all areas that are his ultimate responsibility. Producing, like managing, is a human-intensive art, one at which Italian-Americans are ably suited.

Breaking In

The backgrounds of these media wizards may sound very familiar to us. Vin Di Bona's family emigrated from Sicily in the early 1900's and settled in Providence, RI. His father, like many other Italians, went into the restaurant business, owning a restaurant for over 35 years. Urbisci's parents came from a small fishing village south of Rome in the 1940's and settled in Cleveland, OH, where his father found work as a hotel maintenance man. Bellisario's family arrived in Cokeburg, PA, a small mining town, at the turn of the century from a little town in Abruzzo. His grandfather was a stone mason and soon began his own construction company and beer distributorship. Against the odds, his father graduated from Pittsburgh College



Sam "Salvatore" Lovullo

Lovullo with friends from *Hee Haw*, the longest running show on television, 22 years. Kenny Rogers, Minnie Pearl, Roy Clark, and Grandpa are among them.



with a business degree and opened a tavern the year prohibition ended. Grosso's grandparents came from a small town outside of Naples and settled on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. His father died at the early age of 35 and Sonny, being the only son, helped his mom to raise his three sisters.

Entry into such a glamorous and competitive industry would be hard enough on its own, but each of these men rose to the top of their field on their own through the strength of their efforts. Grosso's story is perhaps the most interesting. Salvatore "Sonny" Grosso spent 17 of his 22 years in law enforcement as a narcotics detective in his old neighborhood of East Harlem. His life changed when he and his partner, Eddie "Popeye" Egan broke the famed "French Connection" case. When his work was made into a feature film (he was played by Roy Scheider in the movie of the same name), he was hired by the film's producer, Phil D'Antoni, as a technical consultant, and also had a bit part. This was Grosso's first taste of Hollywood, and he loved it. Grosso quickly realized



Focus

that there was a tremendous void Hollywood was not filling: the need for consultants to advise scriptwriters, directors, and producers on the real life happenings of police officers. Grosso was introduced to Francis Coppola while filming *The Godfather* in New York and was again hired as a technical advisor and bit actor. Soon thereafter Hollywood producers were knocking on his door to consult and collaborate on other crime-related films and television series such as *Baretta*, *The Rockford Files*, and *Kojak* to achieve authenticity. At this point he turned in his badge and joined forces with executive producer Larry Jacobson, to form Grosso-Jacobson Productions in 1980. Though his credits are too numerous to list here, his current big hit is the popular reality-based television series *Top Cops* on CBS, and *Counterstrike* on the USA Network. Be on the lookout for the premiere of *Missing Angels*, a show which will bring attention to the missing children crisis in America.

Vin DiBona began in the entertainment industry as a pop singer at the ripe age of 16. After one of his songs made it fairly big, he was given the opportunity to promote his work on TV's record hop shows. The medium so piqued his interest that he went to Emerson College and later UCLA film school to learn his craft. After nine years of production work in Boston he and his wife both quit their jobs, packed their bags and young daughter, and headed to Hollywood to achieve fame and fortune.

DiBona feels very blessed and very lucky by the huge success of his two shows. *America's Funniest Home Videos* was originally a Japanese variety show, and when the produc-



Vin Di Bona with some of the many tapes sent in from across the country to *America's Funniest Home Videos*.

ers approached him to do something similar with it in the United States, he decided to give it a try. The show is distributed to 68 countries worldwide, and is very popular in Europe. DiBona attributes his good sense of humor in part to his heritage. He feels his Sicilian soul has made him an astutely organized person who is able to visualize material and create programs enjoyable to all.

Rocco Urbisci and Sam Lovullo were the only ones to begin their careers working in the industry. Urbisci began as a graphics and set designer and quickly became interested in producing and writing shows. Although he has never had formal training in production, his success can be attributed to learning fast on



A scene from Sonny Grosso's *Top Cops*, highlighting the work of everyday police officers

the job. His talent was quickly noticed and he was given his first big break in 1973 producing a music show called *The Midnight Special*. His career took off when he met Richard Pryor and produced the film *Jo Jo Dancer*, a semi-autobiographical story which chronicles the actor's life. This catapulted Urbisci to work with some of Hollywood's hottest stars including Lily Tomlin, Billy Crystal, Robin Williams, Garry Shandling and Roseanne Arnold.

Born in Buffalo, NY, Sam Lovullo, probably has the most incongruous career. Starting in the accounting department at CBS television in 1954 Lovullo ended up producing the longest running show on television. Buffalo ain't exactly the sticks, yet Sam is the father of America's favorite hillbilly hoedown, *Hee Haw*, which ran for 22 years, is now in reruns. Lovullo was tapped by his bosses to co-produce the *Jonathan Winters Show* in 1967. When he noticed that the show's ratings went up with the guest appearances of such country stars as Minnie Pearl and Buck Owens, *Hee Haw* was born. In 1969 *Hee Haw* became *The Smothers Brothers'* summer re-



Whoopi Goldberg standing between her producer Rocco Urbisci and guest, Elton John



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placement. It was country's answer to the wildly popular *Laugh-in*. To Sam Lovullo his love of "Grand Ole Opry" is not as far fetched as we might think. After all, says he, it's about life and being in love, which is exactly what Italian Opera is.

Sensitivities

When asked about his feeling on the way Italian Americans are portrayed on television, Urbisci lamented the fact that "there simply aren't enough sitcom writers of Italian descent in Hollywood." A good illustration of Urbisci's point is the old stereotype sitcom *The Fanelli Brothers*, which has since been taken off the air. The show's credits did not include one Italian-American writer or producer to create a more realistic portrayal of the show's subject matter. However, two of the stars were Italian-American, which seemed to have little positive effect.

Notwithstanding the likes of the *Fanellis* or the *Tortellis*, Vin DiBona feels Italians are fairly portrayed on television and he went on to say that "there is a heritage that we live with

It infuriates Bellisario when he is deluged with letters by angry Italian-Americans for creating an occasional character in the Mafia, while he has never received a thank you for the positive images he too creates.

and a heritage that we understand. Some of it is wonderful, and some of it is not so wonderful." Although he is proud to be Sicilian, he feels that historically there were a lot of his people that went the wrong way, as well as many that went the right way. He feels we have to live with the bad, alongside the good, because it is part of our heritage.

Bellisario is sensitive to the negative Italian stereotypes and with the portrayal of his brethren in a positive manner. His show, *Quantum Leap*, depicts Italian Americans as doctors and lawyers. The show's main character is Admiral Calavicci, a fictitious character played by Dean Stockwell. Calavicci is a respected scientist on the series. It infuriates Bellisario when he is deluged with letters by angry Italian-Americans for creating an occasional character in the Mafia, while he has never received a thank you for the positive images he also creates.

Grosso's experience in Harlem as a narcotics detective, and later as technical advisor for many crime-related films based on Italian American characters, makes him an



Sonny Grosso parlayed his real-life bust of the French Connection into law enforcement's man in Hollywood.

A scene from Don Bellisario's *Quantum Leap*, a weekly out-of-body experience.



ideal person to discuss this subject. The Italians to him are the most hyped organized crime leaders in history. In his opinion, *The Godfather* and *GoodFellas* are true adaptations of what the Mafia underworld is like, including authentic traditions and customs of Italian-American everyday life. He sees these movies as realistic depictions of Italian Americans, without casting moral judgement on the correctness of the characters. (See the Editorial section)



America's Funniest People are also the least inhibited.

Although most of these Italian-American producers do not perceive an Italian-American media image problem, they do predict that more of their ethnic fellows in Hollywood could make a positive difference. Nevertheless, all the television programs mentioned above are all-American. They are fine products of a creative group of people. Whether they cause audiences to laugh or to reflect, they are entertaining America.



Perspectives

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

The Corporate State

by Alfred Cardone

While Russia runs headlong out of socialism, and other European nations latch on to that new capitalist buzz-word *privatization*, it may be of some interest to recall a middle way.

Those who have followed the ups and downs of Italy's economy may well wonder just how a nation with few natural resources and a government of 28 political parties has managed to arrive at the number 5 position (between France and Britain) in world economies. Of course, Italian creativity and business acumen can get some of the credit. Yet how much impetus to Italy's growth has come from the legacy of the Corporate State — Mussolini's creative alternative to Communism and Capitalism?

Although Fascism is generally perceived as a dirty word, the Corporate State should be considered on its own economic merits. The educated observer will note an amazing similarity between the Fascist Corporate State and the remarkably successful economies of present day Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan, which enjoy the fastest rates of economic growth in the world. Each stresses 1) the collaboration of labor, business and government, 2) economic planning, and 3) an industrial policy which promotes and subsidizes promising new industries. In Fascist and post-Fascist Italy, these goals are carried out through 51% government ownership of major corporations. (Communism is 100% government ownership, Capitalism is 0% government ownership. Moreover, unions are forbidden under Communism and mostly resented under Capitalism. The Corporate State permitted unions but controlled their actions through binding arbitration.)

* * *



The Corporate State created a comprehensive system of social services before the Western capitalist states had done so. Family allowances were granted for each child under the age of fourteen.

Pure Capitalism just did not work in pre-Mussolini Italy. 20th Century Italy was engulfed in almost constant economic turmoil characterized by a phenomenal number of strikes. Weak parliamentary governments teetered on collapse and were reduced to the role of an ineffectual bystander. The result of all this was catastrophic.

From his accession to power in 1922, Mussolini was determined to change this state of affairs. The basic goal of Fascist economic policy was to transform Italy

building and construction, metallurgy, grains, vineyards and wine, banking and insurance and so forth. In each case, a government council acted as a sort of supervisor and judge to establish work rules and conditions, formulate general policy and settle any disputes which arose in contract negotiations. Strikes and lockouts were also made illegal.

Fascism created major government institutions and state holding companies to manage and stimulate the Italian

In 1936, Italy entered the ranks of the world's industrialized nations.

from the picturesque and incidentally poor land which Anglo-Saxons seemed to find so charming, into a prosperous, productive and powerful nation.

By a series of laws, Fascism divided the Italian economy into twenty two sections or corporations, one for each distinct occupation or business, comprised of both employers and employees. Such economic associations were created for mining, clothing, chemical industries,

economy and promote the growth of promising industries. These holding companies are still the major component of today's Italian economy. They include the Institute for Industrial Reconstruction (IRI), the Italian Institute for Real Estate (IMI), the National Energy Group (ENI), the National Institute for Exports and the Italian Institute of Tourism, to name a few. Banking

(Continued on p. 20)

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Perspectives

WAS ST. PATRICK AN ITALIAN?

by Don Fiore

To start, we can say that the question of St. Patrick's ethnic origins is really no question at all. In his autobiography, *Confessions*, written shortly before his death, the saint tells us that his father was a Roman official named Calpurnius. Those who know their Shakespeare will recall that Calpurnius was indeed an ancient Italic or Etruscan clan name, Julius Caesar's wife was Calpurnia (daughters always took the the feminine form of the clan name). But lest any of us get too smug over this, we should be reminded that though Patrick was evidently a son of Italy, there is no indication that he held any affinity toward, or even set foot in his ancestral land in the course of his life.

His father was stationed in Britain, which was then still a province of the rapidly disintegrating Roman Empire. It was here that Patrick, or Patricus, as he was actually named, was born in the early 5th century. By this time, Rome and most of the lands under its jurisdiction had become thoroughly Christianized. But Ireland, never a part of the Empire, was inhabited by crude Celtic tribes whose contact with advanced civilization was made only during their increasingly frequent raids upon Roman outposts along the western coast of Britain. It was in the course of one such incursion that young Patricus was taken prisoner and brought back to Ireland as a slave.

After toiling for a good six years under his pagan captors, he made a daring escape by sea and safely found his way back to his father's house. Attributing his deliverance to his faith in the Lord, he resolved to devote his life to God's service and subsequently entered the priesthood. In time he became a bishop, and in this capacity Patricus could think of no higher way of giving thanks for his blessings than by returning to Ireland to convert the very barbarians from whom he had earlier fled.

This wasn't to be the first time such a mission was attempted. Several years previous, Pope Celestine had sent a bishop named Palladius (sometimes known as "Patrick the Elder") to instill Christianity into the Irish, but the effort came to naught. The stubborn Patricus, however, vowed to fulfill his

mission or to die trying. He labored relentlessly at the task and, after overcoming the initially violent hostility of the Irish, indeed managed to bring the entire island into the arms of the church.



Patricus Calpurnius

The esteem and prestige afforded to St. Patrick by the Irish ever since has far surpassed any of that directed toward their own, many native born saints of later years. But there's nothing wrong with that, and we of Italian descent should probably respect their feelings and keep our hands off their beloved patron. After all, we let the French idolize Napoleon Buonaparte.

So should we claim St Paddy? Should we demand a float in the St. Patrick's Day parade with a big banner reading "St. Patrick's father was a Roman!"?

I don't think so. Not only because it's rude, but because such nitpicking over nationalities is a game that's notoriously prone to backfiring. We of Italian background surely have more than enough saints of our own, and some of the most popular, too, weren't Italian themselves. Take St. Anthony of Padua, who many people automatically assume was Italian. He was, in fact, born and raised in Portugal and ended up preaching in Italy more or less by chance. And then there's San Donato di Fiesole, the 9th century Tuscan bishop who, as it turns out, was one hundred percent Irish!

Besides being futile, quarrels over the national origin of this or that saint are contrary to the universality of the Christian faith. We're all supposed to be members of the same Family as Children of God, and the wisest thing to do is to regard the ethnicity of the various saints with minimal significance in view of their true calling and purpose as men and women of the Lord.

But in the secular world, we're free to say anything we want. So gently putting the good St. Patrick aside, I won't hesitate to point out that the legends of King Arthur, another grand hero and pillar of British Isles folklore, are most likely based on the exploits of a bold Roman general named Arturius who, like St. Patrick's father, was serving the Empire in Britain. So there!



Ricci (continued from p 11)

Q. What do you give up by using a charitable remainder trust?

A. The trust must be irrevocable, which means that once you've donated the property in trust, you can not take it back and you cannot receive more than your calculated payout. Also, when the trust terminates, the property goes to charity, not your family. Some people provide for this loss to their family by purchasing insurance with the money they save in taxes.

Q. Are there any other ways to get tax deductions?

A. Yes, there are other types of trust arrangements, such as Charitable Remainder Annuity Trusts and Charitable Lead Trusts. Also, readers should not overlook considering a bequest to the Institute in their wills which not only benefits a worthy organization but entitles his or her estate to a charitable estate tax deduction.*

Q. Many thanks for this vital information. If a reader wants assistance in giving to the Institute, can we help?

A. Certainly. Write to me at P.O. Box 818, Floral Park, NY 11001. I'll be pleased to help any reader and his or her tax adviser and counsel with their charitable giving plans. ****

*Example: "I hereby give, devise and bequeath to the Italic Studies Institute, Inc., P.O. Box 818, Floral Park, NY 11001, a New York corporation, (insert sum or money or description of real or personal property), to be used for the general purposes of said corporation."



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Corporate State (from p. 16)

was also reformed and centralized, and a reliable statistical service established for the first time.

Fascist economic policies and reforms soon achieved very impressive results. In 1924, the national budget was balanced for the first time since the reunification of Italy in 1870. Mussolini launched a program of public works unprecedented in modern Europe, the highlights of which included a modern system of electric railroads, and reclamation of over nine million acres of marsh and swampland. In 1936, Italy entered the ranks of the world's indus-

trialized nations as the percentage of the population engaged in agriculture or related activity fell below 50 percent for the first time.

Extensive social legislation was introduced in Italy before the Western democracies had done so. The Fascist regime created a comprehensive system of insurance to cover health, old age, unemployment, industrial and agricultural accidents and maternity. Family allowances were granted for each child under the age of fourteen. The expenditure on education rose dramatically and legislation mandating minimum wages, paid vacations, the eight hour day and the

forty hour week was also enacted.

Of course Italians paid a price for the Corporate State in the loss of freedom. And 51% government ownership did not produce enough planes, tanks and guns necessary for Italy's armed forces in World War II. Nevertheless, the corporate structure survived the war and helped produce a second miracle in the post war years. Unfortunately, today's "Party-ocracy" has played havoc with Italy's state corporations. Nevertheless, with a little fine-tuning and political discipline this middle way may propel Italy to number 4 or even number 3. *Achtung, Deutschland!* **

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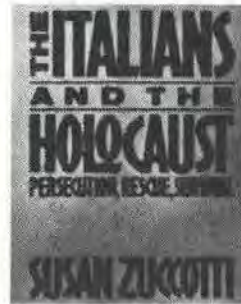
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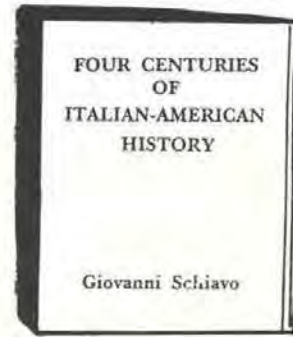
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Media Madness

[In which we present media material with commentary]



ITEM: Brooklyn actress Marisa Tomei wins an Academy Award for her supporting role in *My Cousin Vinnie*.

COMMENT: The Hollywood Academy continues its tradition of rewarding Italian-American stereotypes. Among characters who have won an Oscar are a punch drunk fighter from Philly (*Rocky*), gangland murderers (*Godfather I & II*), a sadistic creep (*GoodFellas*), and now a semi-literate female auto mechanic from Bensonhurst. Funny she is. But what price glory?

ITEM: Italian-American playwright Frankie Pugliese has authored an off-Broadway play called *Aven'U Boys*.

COMMENT: Even hardened critics wince at the degrading stereotypes. Once again it's the Bensonhurst bigots on trial. This grotesque smear ends in a Sinatra song fade-out. (Note: This play was seen by a non-member of the Institute who commented, "I see why you fellows started the Italic Studies Institute.")



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ITEM: The trade journal *Bank Systems & Technology* carried an ad by the Kirchman Corporation marketing its new computer receivables collection program. Hey, what else to call this get-tough program but Guido. Not Mario. He's the plumber.

COMMENT: Guido? Here's a guy the Aven'U Boys could look down on. One wonders if A.P. Giannini, founder of the Bank of America, would condone this bad taste were he alive. Then again, we shouldn't be so sensitive. After all, the editors of *Bank Systems & Technology* saw no harm in this ad. (Note: this ad was brought to our attention by ISI member Salvatore Caruana, who wrote to the journal in protest.)

ITEM: A recent segment of the comedy *Fresh Prince of Bel Air* had one black character threatening to force his way into a university using "a friend with excessive body hair and mozzarella breath." The National Italian-American Foundation (NIAF) protested the show to NBC.

COMMENT: When filmmaker Frankie Coppola and writer Mario Puzzo (sorry, only one "z", two would mean "stench") created the *Godfather* in 1972 little did anyone suspect how long the stereotyping would last — 21 years thus far. Nor did anyone expect the whole Italian culture would be dragged into the muck by every jokester and scriptwriter. Unfortunately, not many other groups in the American mosaic share our tolerance and capacity for absorbing bad taste. We share the field with no one.





Media Madness

ITEM: Sicily always takes a beating but Geraldo Riviera crossed the line with his "Blood Island" special on TV.

COMMENT: In one scene he stands before the camera in a bullet-proof vest explaining that he was scheduled to appear with a Palermo city official who failed to show. It seems that Geraldo wanted the official to also wear a vest, in keeping with the Blood Island theme of the special. The Italian official wouldn't take the bait and instead challenged Geraldo to appear with him without the theatrical wardrobe. In the interest of tabloid television journalism Geraldo went it alone. This clownish television special was sponsored in part by Perillo Tours. Good choice, Mario!

And then there was the *Newsday* (Long Island's only mass circulation newspaper) Travel article by Italian-American Jim Puzzanghera (note two "zz's") and his non-Italic wife in search of the Mafia in Sicily. A number of suspicious looking natives caught their eye but the hunt was for naught. They didn't even see Geraldo. Nevertheless, the piece had the intended effect of promoting stereotypes.



ITEM: The New York Times' headline *Italy's Moral Crumbling* gives the innocents of the earth a vicarious feel for dishonest politics.

COMMENT: Make no mistake about it, the current Italian political system is reaching the end of its Jurassic Age. The post-war fear of Communism and Fascism that created a government of 28 political parties has now evolved into a demand for simpler, dignified government. Nevertheless, in any test of morality the Italian nation and the Italian people are second to none. As usual, the *Times* cannot resist ludicrous headlines. Among their golden oldies is "Shame of a Nation" (about a 5-year girl stranded for thirty minutes along the side of a Florence highway after her father died of a heart attack at the wheel of their car.) Some of Italy's dramatic Opera is infecting the *Times* staff.

ITEM: *New York Magazine* reporter Harry Kavros stumbles upon a Mussolini T-shirt in darkest Mulberry Street and denounces the store owner.

COMMENT: On the surface, the establishment known as E. Rossi & Company appears to be your typical Italian-American novelty shop—filled with pasta bowls, cappuccino makers and rotund, earthy women. But behind this benign facade lurks the spirit of Fascism. This lurid secret has now been exposed for all the world to see. It is now only a matter of time before Kavros exposes all those purveyors of Don Corleone posters and Mafia staff car license plate holders. By the way, the store's owner told Kavros. "Get out of here! It's a free country."





News of the Institute

AURORA EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Level II youth class (11 & 12 year olds) was completed on March 20th with an Italian banquet at a local restaurant. Having learned the rudiments of their new foreign language, the youngsters celebrated by tasting a variety of foods that included *pasta e fagioli*, *tortellini al pesto*, *calamari fritti*, *scungilli alla marinara*, *vitello alla Marsala*, and *sfinigi Siciliani* in honor of St. Joseph's Day. In all, the program was a pleasing introduction to Italy. Italic culture has its privileges!

PROJECT ITALIA

Filmmaker Tony DeNonno has taped interviews with seven Italian immigrants of various age and vocational backgrounds for our video entitled *American Visions*. As far as we know, the Institute is the first to video tape these testimonials. As intermarriage and death take their toll on the Italian heritage, we hope to make this a permanent record for future generations. If you know of anyone with an interesting past and who would make a good video subject, contact Michelle Delino at (516) 488-7400. If you wish to contribute to this unique undertaking, contact John Mancini at the same number.



Filmmaker Tony DeNonno specializes in carefully crafted human interest videos.

Among his films is the story of Antonio Meucci, inventor of the telephone.



Playwright Mario Fratti immigrated to America after WWII. He came for freer cultural expression.



Thommaso Papagallo, with his wife Isabella, came to America after WWII as a marble cutter working at the Capitol in Washington, DC. He fought in the Italian Army in Africa and the Balkans. Captured by the Soviets, he suffered five years of imprisonment in Siberia.



Salvatore DeTomaso is 94 years old. A tailor by trade, Mr. DeTomaso immigrated to the USA in 1923. He served in the Italian Army during the First World War as an artilleryman.

DINNER DANCE

With the 6th Annual Dinner at the Waldorf-Astoria only a short time away (May 8th), Chairman Angelo Croce and his committee are putting the final touches on preparations and ticket sales. As usual, the emphasis is on good music, good food, good time. Speeches are *vietato* (forbidden)! Ticket prices remain at \$300 per seat. The proceeds will help fund Institute operations and programs like *The Italic Way* in the 1993-94 year. Despite the recession, sales are fantastic.



GOLF OUTING

The outing and dinner are set for August 16th at the Hempstead Golf & Country Club, Long Island. PaineWebber, our sponsor, is providing thousands of dollars in prizes including a 1994 Infinity Q45. See the ad in this issue. Contact Elizabeth Polizzi for tickets at (516) 488-7400.

ITALY TOUR

Social Chairman Pat Grecco has announced a 15 day/13 night October tour of Italy. Specific information has been sent out to all members. A deposit is required.



GIFT & MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGN

The governors have given the go-ahead to a special membership campaign that will benefit all our existing and new members. Rather than spending thousands of dollars in advertising, the Institute will let its present membership spread the word and earn gift points in the process. Look for our gift brochure in the mail. You'll not only be eligible for gifts but also a \$1,000 bonus award. We are really helping each other.



ELECTIONS

The February elections were no surprise and the existing slate of officers was reelected by the Plenary Council. Chairmanships of the Council of Governors and Advisory Council are set for nomination in May.

2-YEAR TERMS DEFEATED

A move to extend officer terms to two years failed to gain approval by the Council of Governors.

The governors voted to strengthen the Advisory Council with additional constitutional requirements and authority. New appointments were made to this council: Don Fiore (Chicago), William Cerruti and Robert Masullo (Sacramento), Alfred Cardone, John Positano, and Rosario Iaconis (Metro NY)

CHICAGO COUNCIL IN THE WORKS

Attracted by the Institute's unique perspective on the Italian heritage, a group of Chicagoans chaired by newly-appointed Advisor Don Fiore has been seeking ways to assemble a Chicago Plenary Council. Although constitutional and administrative groundwork must be done, Fiore has embarked on a course to introduce *The Italic Way* and our educational products to metropolitan Chicago. Fiore's pet project is greater publicity for Italian Heritage Month in October. The New York Council also needs to make it a priority here.



PLENARY MEMBER MAKES THE BIG TIME

Plenary Council member Ron Bellistri made the March 15th issue of *People* magazine when the camera caught him looking after Mr. & Mrs. Arnold Schwarzenegger. Ron's company, Copstat Security, provided security for Schwarzenegger's film, *The Last Action Hero*, which was shot in Manhattan's Times Square.

LUNCHEON FEATURES MEUCCI

Changing our meeting format from evening to noon-time has greatly increased Plenary Council participation. Despite the recession, 84 members and guests turned out for our first luncheon of 1993 on April 6th. Featured speaker was filmmaker Tony DeNonno who presented his short film on the life of Antonio Meucci, the 19th Century inventor of the telephone. Future Plenary Council luncheons are scheduled for June 1st, September 16th, and November 18th.



President Al Crecca, left, and Mary Ann Minucci (Assistance Chairman) conversing with members.



John Antonacci, Vincent Pizzulli, and Governor Michael Downey. Something has Mike's attention.



Johann-Era Drew & Susan Lombard of the Council for the United States and Italy.



PROFILES



Brigadier General Frank Libutti USMC

Hollywood rarely associates Italian Americans with the armed forces. If memory serves, the highest ranking Italic depicted in the movies was Major Joppolo in *A Bell for Adano*, and Lt. Philip Caputo in the Vietnam film *Rumor of War*. Otherwise, they are non-commissioned types, dogfaces and swabs, who do their duty with less griping than the rest. In fact, it is doubtful that few other ethnic groups in the American population has participated in the U.S. military in greater proportion than Italian-Americans in the First and Second World Wars.

Yet, the more recent Persian Gulf and Somalia actions have also given Italian-Americans cause to be proud. They made no television movie about Lt. Marie Rossi, the first woman soldier in American history to die in action, but she represents an officer corps of Italian-Americans that provides leadership to our nation. Others, to name a few, are General Carl Vuono, former Army Chief of Staff, and General John Tilelli, commander of the Army's First Cavalry Division during the drive on Iraq.

In the humanitarian-inspired Somalia action, Brigadier Frank Libutti oversees U.S. operations for the Pentagon's Central Command Region. Libutti

manages the logistical, supply and manpower demands for the American contingent, combining the duties of Inspector general and task force commander. Now 47, he was the youngest brigadier general in Marine history at age 46. A native of Huntington, Long Island, Gen. Libutti came from a military family. His father, recently deceased, was an Army artilleryman. Libutti served in Vietnam, where he was wounded and received a Silver Star. He met and married his future wife while they were both stationed in the Naples area. They have two children.



The Italian presence in Somalia began in the late 19th Century. Italy was made a UN trustee from 1950 to 1960.



Italian Marine of the San Marco battalion on station in Mogadishu

The Italic connection with Somalia extends beyond General Libutti. Among the other nations participating in the war-torn East African nation is Italy with a troop commitment of 2,500 men. Ironically, most of the Italian military units have battle scars from Africa dating back to the Second World War. Even before that, Somalia was an Italic colony. It is not surprising, then, that the Italian language is spoken by many older Somalians and it was the official language of the Somalia university system prior to the civil wars. Pasta was also a staple of the country.

Nor has Italian influence faded. Even the warring factions of Somalia have unanimously requested training for the newly envisioned paramilitary police by Italy's famed Carabinieri.



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Lorenzo's Oil (from p. 10)

are without a doubt the two greatest non-conformists we have seen. While Michaela has devoted her life to Lorenzo's daily life struggles, Augusto has been the strategist in combatting ALD. An attorney and economist by trade, Augusto Odone has educated himself so thoroughly in ALD that he has acquired an honorary medical degree.

Augusto, played by non-Italic actor Nick Nolte, is quintessentially Italian - strong-willed, a questioner of authority, a do-it-yourselfer. Combatting both a smug medical profession and bureaucratic foundation leaders, Nolte's Augusto is obsessed with fending off death. It is Augusto Odone who conceives of Lorenzo's Oil, a blend of special olive and rapeseed oils that reduces the long-chain fatty acids in his son's blood which are destroying his nervous system.

Rarely is a movie as multi-ethnic as

this one: the film opens in Africa, where the Odone's lived for a time, and Swahili is the third most-often heard language we hear, after Italian, of course. Even the

Augusto Odone specifically demanded that no Italian-American play his role because of their mafia typecasts

rapeseed oil is produced by an elder English chemist. Nolte's selection to play Augusto is testimony to the damage already done by stereotypes. Augusto

Odone specifically demanded that no Italian-American play his role because of their mafia typecasts. Nolte is good and his Italian is passable. Susan Sarandon, who is Italian-American, performs superbly as Michaela. Ironically, Ms. Sarandon has never had an opportunity to play an Italic character - certainly no positive Italian-American female role has been written to date.

Lorenzo's Oil is a heart-wrenching film, especially for parents. On an ethnic level, Augusto Odone brings a much needed lift to the Italic people. He carries his heritage with pride, even quoting Latin. And with the strains of grand opera enveloping most scenes, there is no mistake that *Lorenzo's Oil* is the heritage that Italian-Americans have been denied elsewhere in the media.



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MAC (from p. 10)

Grandpa Turturro's funeral that is part Bergman, part Monty Python and part Italian Gothic. It is at this dark gathering that we are introduced to the brothers Turturro, the ill-fated triumvirate of home construction.

In what can only be called the Romulus and Remus bathroom scene, the Turturro brothers agree to join forces while one defecates, another shaves and the other bathes. They cement their union by invoking the founders of Rome. A solemn vow in such a less-than-august forum bodes ill for the Turturros and this film. It is a deeply flawed homage to Italians. Can you imagine Woody Allen emitting flatulence at the Wailing

Turturro's world, however, is hardly an Italic Eden. Turturro feels compelled to examine every grain of dirt under his family's fingernails.

Wall or Spike Lee urinating while discussing Malcom X?

Mac's unrelenting work ethic degenerates into a maniacal obsession. His ambition to build a cluster of single family homes in Queens, NY, brings him to the edge of a nervous breakdown, alienates his brothers and ultimately undercuts his nobility. Despite the ultimate destruction of the family, the homes are built, and built well.

Mac is an intensely serious film with a message that is garbled. For those

Italian-Americans who witnessed firsthand the fanaticism of the Italic work ethic, this film had great possibilities. But Turturro is not nearly as bold as his father. The gritty histrionics and Spike Lee-inspired gutter drama mar what could have been an Italian-American tale of courage. Given the feeble financial backing for such films, it is an opportunity to enlighten that John Turturro may never have again. *Audentis Fortuna iuvat.* (Fortune favors the bold.) ****

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