

THE Italic Way

XXVIII 1998

The magazine of the Italic Studies Institute

In this Issue:

Forging a Nation:
Italy's Civil War

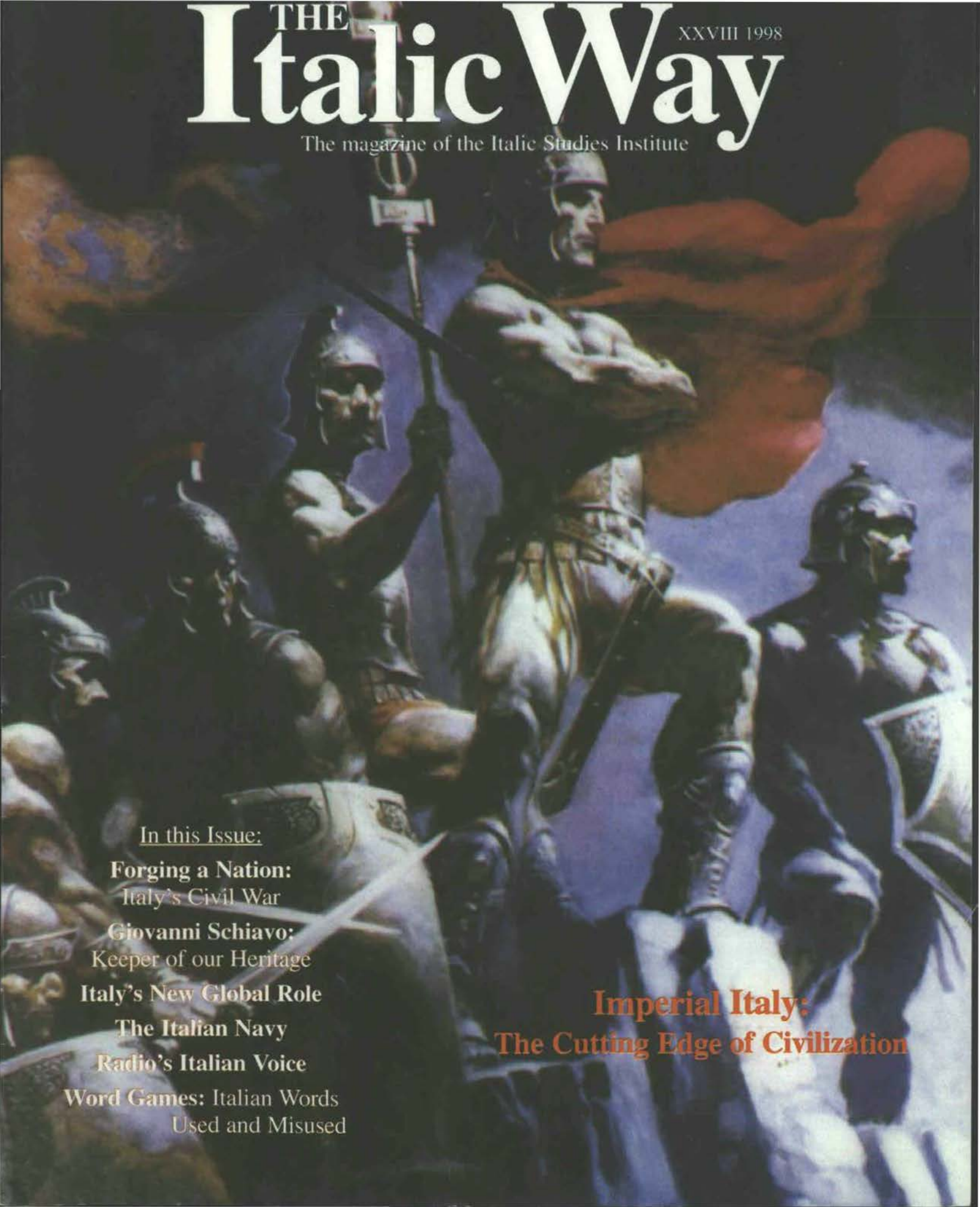
Giovanni Schiavo:
Keeper of our Heritage

Italy's New Global Role
The Italian Navy

Radio's Italian Voice

Word Games: Italian Words
Used and Misused

Imperial Italy:
The Cutting Edge of Civilization



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The Italic Way

CONTENTS

Letters	1
All'Italiana	4
World Notes	6
Editorials	8
Forum of The People	9
Italian American Radio	10
Imperial Italy	12
Giovanni Schiavo	17
Forging A Nation: Italy's Civil War	19
The Italian Navy Today	22
Word Games	25
Italy's Global Role	27

Director - Italic Way - Rosario A. Iaconis
 Managing Editor - John L. Mancini
 Production Manager - Rita L. Mancini
 Feature Writers - Alfred Cardone, Bill Dal Cerro
 Don Fiore, Robert Masullo

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Direct all inquiries to (516) 488-7400.
 Fax: (516) 488-4889 Website: italic.org
 e-mail: ItalicOne@aol.com

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Letters

WRONG GUY?

I recently read volume XXVII of *The Italic Way* (my first issue) and was both pleased and disturbed by your article "Millennium." I was pleased that the article exposes the discrimination Italian Americans have been, and continue to be, subjected to by the entertainment media. As one of Joseph Profaci's many grandchildren, however, I was disturbed by your reference to him as a "hard-core criminal." I have never before heard him described in that manner, not even by the FBI. By labeling him a "hard-core criminal" as you do, you perpetuate those same stereotypes, and also help perpetuate disension among the Italian American community. You also do a disservice to his numerous hard-working and law abiding descendants who are trying so hard to cast off the chains of this false legacy. I hope that in the future you will be more careful.

You also fail to recognize that what you call the "mafia," far from having crime as its *naison d'etre*, was to a large degree a surrogate government and a system of justice and even an ideal and way of life, for a people who had silently and with dignity endured the major portion of the last 2,500 years under the domination of hostile foreign governments.

That said, all in all, your article was wonderful. Keep up the good work.
 Vincent J. Profaci, Apopka, FL

[Ed. We will shy away from the semantics of the word "hard-core." Suffice it to say that one Joseph Profaci has made most of the history books on New York gangsters. However, we can appreciate your fond memories of him as a member of your extended family. Unfortunately, your defense of the Mafia's origins, as a Sherwood Forest epic, is no doubt one of the reasons the media run amuck at our expense. The sad fact that that viewpoint is popular among many Italian-Americans causes us concern. Thanks for the insight.]

BORN AGAIN

It is a privilege to be a member of Italic Studies. I've finally found an organization which expresses my views completely. I used to be a member of [another Italian-American organization], but found the organization to be quite lacking in judgement, e.g. recognizing and honoring actors who portray Italians in a negative way. I wish you the very best.
 Maria Powers, Lindenhurst, NY

CHICO MARX EXCUSED

[Regarding the article in the November 1997 issue "Hollywood vs. Italians"] I beg to differ that the Marx Bros. character of Chico was a negative portrayal of an Italian immigrant. Chico came across as a good-hearted but bumbling type that was always trying to help

people with disastrous results and his comical use of malaprops had no end — but in the real everyday life of that era we did know many immigrants of all types that did fit his model and, of course, Chico's piano playing always gave testimony to the Italian's love of music. As a life-long student of the Marx Bros. I can say this: Initially when they hit the vaudeville circuit Chico was known as "The Dago." An agent later on had them change his name as their act with the harp and piano playing had too much class.

Walter Santi, Bloomington, IL

HITTING A LINGUISTIC NERVE

In your most recent *All'Italiana* section of *The Italic Way* you claim that more U.S. high school students study Latin than Italian. While your claim may be correct, it is also highly misleading. In U.S. colleges and universities, according to data from various sources, it is Italian that is more studied than Latin, being in 5th place among foreign languages, against Latin's still-popular 7th position. In the U.K.'s institutions of higher education the position of Italian is at a respectable 6th place, while Latin there, curiously enough, doesn't even figure among the top 10 languages studied!

In my view, the only place where Italian has already become a dead language is in *The Italic Way*. You use Dante's language only in tidbits here and there, more for effect than out of sincere linguistic patronage, and you use the language with about the same frequency as an educated Italian would use



Continued on page 3





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Letters

Latin! Indeed, I'm afraid that one might hear more Italian on Radio Japan, than read it in *The Italic Way*...

Cesidio Tallini, S. Floral Park, NY

[Ed. That piece was a wake-up call for Italian language promotion but also one of pride (see the news excerpt that follows). Latin is, after all, an Italic language! As for dropping our Italian section, it may return if enough readers are really interested.]

FLASH*** (*Chicago Tribune*, October 6, 1997)

A student named Gail Bremner was among 240 students of Latin from twelve Chicago-area schools and one in Springfield... they countered the myth that Latin is a dead language. Teachers at the Roman festival estimated that 7,000 Illinois high school students are studying Latin. Classes are even held for 6th, 7th and 8th graders at Barrington Middle School, where 110 youngsters have chosen Latin over languages such as French and Spanish. Others believe it will help them with language arts questions on the American College Test and Scholastic Aptitude Test.

Bremner, who may pursue a career in medicine, is looking for a way to get the edge on other students in SAT scores.

"I want to be a veterinarian, and Latin will help me understand medical terms," he said.

PRO-ASSIMILATION

I wish every Italian-American could read your article, "Millennium: Will we Survive?"

However, it is "the American way" to discard our immigrant past. As Italians, we have much to be proud of, but our Italian-ness is only a small part of what we are. It is seldom in the forefront of our consciousness.

Meanwhile, crushed by an indifferent and discriminatory society, we strive to assert ourselves. And I'll buy into that.

Thank you for your profound and thought-provoking article, which got to the heart of the Italian-American dilemma.

Dan A. D'Amelio, Yucaipa, CA

NO APOLOGIES

[*The New York Times*, October 10, 1997]

A new film, *Hoodlum*, recently released by MGM/UA, raises the issue. The film, about gangsters in Harlem in the 1930's, depicts Thomas E. Dewey — the former Governor of New York, a two-time Republican Presidential nominee and a New York prosecutor in the 30's — as a corrupt public official who accepted bribes from



the criminals he was prosecuting.

Historians have considered Dewey, who died in 1971, an honest, strait-laced, somber figure.

Dewey's son, Thomas E. Dewey, Jr, in a letter published in *The New York Times*, said that "no valid claim of artistic license can be invoked to justify such a malicious reinvention of a historical figure, particularly when a fictional character could have been created to fill the role."

In recent weeks, Mr. Dewey sent a letter to Frank Mancuso, the MGM chairman, about the depiction of his father. The response, from Mr. Mancuso's lawyers, said: "This film was a work of fiction, and it was presented as such to the public. MGM has not violated any legally cognizable rights of either your father or your family."

[ED. Mancuso was the Paramount Studios chief who produced the *Godfather* saga. Defamation, ethnic or personal, comes with the profits.]

NO RELIEF IN SIGHT

[*MEDIA TIDBITS*, *The New York Times*, Wednesday, November 19, 1997]

Mr. Moonves of CBS-TV said, "We even have an idea in development with Francis Ford Coppola. He has a great idea for a kind of Mafia soap opera."

CBS had an enormous success last season with another Mafia miniseries, *The Last Don*, and it will bring out *The Last Don II* this May.

Mr. Moonves said he was especially pleased with the performance of *Bella Mafia* because the show's rating dwarfed that of the hugely expensive theatrical movie, *Batman Forever*, on NBC, drawing a 14.8 rating to *Batman's* 8.3. (Each rating point represents 980,000 homes).

"We had the cheapest movie, and we won," Mr. Moonves said.

Actor Robert Admiral-De Niro (he is only one-quarter Italian) claims that if the script is right — he'd consider appearing in a fourth *Godfather* epic. In the meantime, his Tribeca Productions is co-producing a four-hour miniseries, *The Mob*, for NBC.

Our feature writer, Bill Dal Cerro, reports that his continuing research into Hollywood's hatchet job on the Italic Community has arrived at some new statistics. After reviewing 210 more movie plots Bill determined that of a total of 651 movies since the 1930's 120 (18%) have been positive. This is higher than the 12% figure Bill arrived at in his article in our last issue. As Bill explains it he is finding more pre-*Godfather* movies. Still, the overwhelmingly majority (82%) have been gangster or buffoon-related and they have been predominantly of the *Godfather* era (1972 to present). The point is that we had more balanced media before Franky Coppola and Shorty Scorsese.

THE RIGHT TO COMPLAIN

[This letter was written by one of our Chicago members to *Fru Noi*. ("Among Ourselves") a Chicagoland ethnic monthly, October 1997]

Many of us are frankly angry about the commercial exploitation of the Mafia theme. What about all the true stories of the outstanding Italian scientists,

medical researchers, artists, and jurists that are not being made?

Surely, I don't lose my right to complain just because Hollywood people with Italian-American names want to hustle bucks at the expense of the community's good name. I don't recall delegating my conscience, my intelligence and my good name to their mercies.

One thing is absolutely clear. We shall never solve the problem by pretending it will go away without our doing anything about it. We've done that ever since *The Godfather* came out.

Where has it gotten us? While African Americans and Hispanics have made significant strides by standing up for their rights, we all too often pretend the world will leave us alone if we just hide in our shells. It hasn't and it won't. Only the courage to act will win us the respect that our rich culture so richly deserves.

Michael Polelle, Professor of Law, John Marshall Law School

BREAKTHROUGH

[This was the response to a letter sent by our Midwest rep. Bill Dal Cerro concerning the politically incorrect RICO statute: *Rackets Inspired Criminal Organization*.]

Until the title of the law is changed by Congress, every issue of the weekly "Advance Sheets" for the Federal Reporter and the Federal Supplement will contain cases discussing "RICO," perpetuating (perhaps at a subconscious level) a link between Italo-Americans and organized crime.

What might have started as an "inside joke" for Congressional staffers has been enshrined as a continuing insult to Italo-Americans. In the future I will try to use a more neutral phrase, such as "civil racketeering law."

Steve P. Garmisa, Chicago, IL

[Ed. note: Mr. Garmisa writes a weekly law column for the *Chicago Sun-Times*.]

LIFE IMITATES ART

[Here is the response given to our man Bill Dal Cerro by the Chicago Crime Commission after Bill observed that their recently published *Book of Crime* utilized mostly photos of Italic gangsters.]

"Chicago has always had a diverse organized crime element. This diversity is greater than any similar organizations in points east of Chicago. Apparently the years of Hollywood hype and the glorification of the Chicago [Italian] Outfit has remained in the minds of the general public.

Wayne A. Johnson, Chief Investigator
Chicago Crime Commission

ERRATA

We thank readers Frank Longo of Staten Island, NY, and Joseph Maselli of New Orleans for pointing out an error in part one of the "Italian-Americans In Jazz" article (Vol. XXVI): Dominick "Nick" La Rocca was a cornetist, not a clarinetist.

Please address all letters to: Letters, The Italic Way, P.O. Box 818, Floral Park, New York 11001



All'Italiana

GLORIA ITALIAE

• **Sonny Bono**, 62, talented and versatile composer, vocalist, entrepreneur, and political activist died tragically in a skiing accident. Bono, born of Sicilian parents, broke into the music business as a singer/meat delivery driver who caught the attention of some music executives. Ten of his recordings with singing partner Cher went gold. Among his hits were *Needles and Pins* (for the Searchers), *Baby Don't Go*, *I Got You Babe*, and *The Beat Goes On*. In 1994, he was elected to Congress as a Republican from California where he gained the respect of his colleagues for his pragmatic and satirical criticism of Congressional antics.

• **Claire Giannini Hoffman**, 92, daughter of banking genius A.P. Giannini, founder of the Bank of America. Giannini Hoffman became the first woman to serve on the boards of Bank of America (1949-1986) and Sears, Roebuck & Company (1963-1970).

• **Joseph Alioto**, 81, the dynamic mayor of San Francisco during the 1960's. His bold administration fostered the construction of over 100 high-rise buildings including the signature Transamerica Pyramid (Transamerica was founded by that other San Francisco giant A.P. Giannini) and the Embarcadero Center. His quest for the governorship in 1969 (the year Puzo published *The Godfather*) was stymied by a slanderous article in *Look Magazine* linking him to *La Cosa Nostra*. Alioto sued and won \$350,000 in damages, the cost of which led *Look* to bankruptcy. He ran and won the mayorship in 1971 but lost a later bid for the statehouse to Jerry Brown.



• Boxing Champion **Willie Pastrano**, 62, who taught Mohammed Ali how to dance in the ring during sparring sessions, died in his place of birth - New Orleans. Willie's father, Frank, inspired him to use his fists after a childhood bully smacked the overweight lad one day. Frank threatened to beat Willie up if he did not defend himself. Willie's career culminated in the light-heavyweight championship in 1963.

• France's master jazz violinist, **Stephane Grappelli**, 89, helped to shatter the image of jazz as exclusively American. Inspired by American jazz greats like violinist Joe Venuti and Louis Armstrong, Grappelli also studied Gypsy guitarists to find his niche.

• Medal of Honor recipient, **Peter Dalessandro**, 79, was also believed to be the second most decorated American veteran of the Second World War, after Audie Murphy. Among his other citations were three Purple Hearts, two Silver Stars, a Bronze Star, and the French Croix de Guerre. He was wounded and captured in Germany in 1944.



• **Richard Donopria**, 90, pioneered the multiple event arena in 1941. As the new building superintendent of the old Madison Square Garden, Donopria developed the techniques to convert arenas from one sporting event to another. He held this position for 55 years until age 80.

• **Jean Pasqualini**, 71, was born of Chinese and Corsican parents and suffered persecution at the hands of the Chinese Communists because he worked as a translator for foreigners. His 7-year imprisonment and the publication of his book, *Prisoner of Mao*, was the first expose on the horrid Communist penal system.

• Police training specialist **Livio Beccaccio**, 58, was killed in a U.N. helicopter crash in Bosnia during a tour to revive local police forces in that war-ravaged country. Prior to his death, Beccaccio was on the training staff of the F.B.I. Academy at Quantico, VA, where he provided training to 1,000 police officers per year. A very competitive man with a quick sense of humor, he was once surprised by a class of 270 men who donned masks with Beccaccio's likeness. "I've been here 15 years," said Mr. Beccaccio without pause, "and I must tell you that this is the best-looking class that's ever come through this academy."

• Physicist and electronics engineer **Eugene Fubini**, 84. Born and educated in Italy, Fubini journeyed to the United States with his father who had received a teaching position in Princeton, NJ. Because of his expertise in the new microwave technology, he was employed by the American military to develop jamming operations against Axis radar during the Second World War. He later went on to become the Assistant Defense Secretary for research and development during the Kennedy Administration. His career then took him to IBM where he was a group vice president.

• Television news consultant **Ron Tindiglia**, 51, is widely credited with helping to develop the "Eyewitness News" format that is a staple across America. He also pioneered the prototype business news format with a program called *Today's Business*.

- **Sabatino Moscati**, 74, linguist, archaeologist and specialist in Semitic history. Professor Moscati brought the world's attention to the Semitic influence across the Mediterranean including their significant colonial presence in Sicily, sharing the island with the native Italic people and the colonizing Greeks.

- **Guitarist Tommy Tedesco**, 67, king of the studio musicians was rated "the most recorded guitarist in history" by *Guitar Player Magazine*. His solo guitar is most memorable in the theme from *Bonanza*, but he also provided the music for *M*A*S*H*, *Batman*, and *Green Acres*. Tedesco was the guitarist behind major rock 'n' roll recordings like, *MacArthur Park* (Richard Harris), *Strangers in the Night* (Sinatra), *Be My Baby* (Ronettes), *Gypsies, Tramps and Thieves* (Cher), *Eve of Destruction* (Barry McGuire), *You've Lost that Lovin' Feeling* (Righteous Bros.) and many, many more.

- **Giovanni Di Chiro**, 70, was a pioneer in computer-imaging the central nervous system, including MRI. He was born and educated in Naples, moving to the United States in 1958.

- **Master jockey Eddie Arcaro**, 81, won two Triple Crowns and five Kentucky Derbies, rode 4,779 winners and earned some \$30 million in purses during his career.

- **Pete Comandini**, 56, pioneered film restoration techniques. Among his credits are *Gone with the Wind*, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, and *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon*.

HIGH PLACES

Two of the most sensitive positions in U.S. Government have been given to Italian-Americans. The new head of the IRS, **Charles Rossotti**, 56, is a management systems expert who headed American Management Systems, a leader in global technology. He says he'll need ten years to modernize and redirect the lumbering bureaucracy. Appointing a technical whiz to the IRS is a first — the usual job requirement was tax law and accounting — and Rossotti's first challenge will be to prevent a Year 2000 blackout in the agency's outdated computer system.

President Clinton's new Director of the Secret Service is **Lewis Merletti**, an Army Special Forces veteran who worked his way



up the Secret Service ladder. Among his assignments over the years was direct responsibility for the President's and First Family's safety. Director Merletti is a native of Pittsburgh.

Running unopposed for a second term as Mayor of Boston, **Thomas Mennino** can make us proud. He was the first Italian-American to break the Irish lock on Boston politics. He has a 74% approval rating.

With the departure of Gov. William Weld from the Massachusetts statehouse in a failed pursuit of an ambassadorship to Mexico, the Lt. Governor assumed command. That man is **Paul Cellucci** (sell-OO-chee). One of his first acts in office was to redecorate the office with a portrait of former governor John Volpe, also an Italian-American. Down came the portrait of notorious former Governor James Curley "the rascal king". The Italic tide is sweeping Massachusetts.



The New York office of the FBI is now headed by career agent **Lewis Dennis Schiliro**. This 48-year old Fed's appointment was well-earned. He was the undercover agent who penetrated the trash-hauling industry and helped free it from the grip of organized crime. He was part of the team that busted the Pizza Drug Connection, the Lufthansa Heist, and Teflon Don Gotti. His new adversaries are the Russian Mob and the Iberian-American cartels.

LOSING VOTES

There was once a time when it was inconceivable to have a non-Italian pope. But since the elevation of the Polish pontiff, John Paul II, the Sacred College of Cardinals, the body that elects a new pope, has been de-Italianized. During his reign Pope John Paul II has appointed 106 of the 123 voting cardinals. Of this total only 23 are Italian. Although the Italians make up the largest single nationality it is a far cry from their dominance over the centuries.





WORLD NOTES

CASSINI IN ORBIT

Much controversy surrounded the successful launch last October of the Cassini spacecraft to Saturn. The fear was, and still is, that a failure of the launch and orbit could rain down to earth 72 pounds of radioactive plutonium. Although the payload got off safely, Cassini will swing by Earth in 1999, within 500 miles, before the forces of the universe carry it to Saturn. The plutonium is considered by the project scientists to be the most dependable energy source to transmit signals during the eleven year mission. (*Nota bene:* Enrico Fermi pioneered the use of atomic energy and Guglielmo Marconi developed radio transmission.)

Cassini is a NASA project but the Italian Space Agency provided a specially designed probe that will be released on Titan, a moon of Saturn. The chairman of Italy's space agency called Cassini "...the link that connects this millennium to the next."

By the way, Cassini was named for Gian Domenico Cassini, a 17th Century Italian astronomer.

MOB JOBS?

Thanks, in part, to the media, the legend of *La Cosa Nostra* grows each year. It has been linked to the assassination of President Kennedy, the hare-brained scheme to poison Fidel Castro's cigars, and now it is being blamed for the murders of Gianni Versace and Martin Luther King.

According to convicted King assassin James Earl Ray, a Memphis grocer with Mafia connections, Frank Liberto, actually paid someone to hire someone else to kill Dr. King.



Mr. Ray pleaded guilty to the murder in 1968 but recanted three days later. He was convicted anyway and is serving a 99-year sentence. A former Memphis District Attorney, John Pierotti, doesn't buy the story, adding, "There should be a pest law against people who advance these theories that lead nowhere."

In the case of Gianni Versace, the murderer's (Andrew Cunanan) mother has defended her late son by blaming the Mob for setting him up. The English press picked up on the theory publishing articles in *The Observer*, *Punch Magazine*, and *The Independent* that suggested Versace was into money laundering for the Mafia. The Versace Family sued the three publications and received retractions and hefty settlements.

Such is the power of Hollywood images in the global village.

WOMEN OF NOTE

- The new Miss Italy is a stunning beauty from Calabria named Claudia Trieste. This 18-year old is presently enrolled in a high school for science.



- The first Italian-American woman on a U.S. postage stamp (32¢) is Rosa Ponselle, a famous opera star earlier this century. Born in Connecticut of Neapolitan parents, her talent brought her on stage with Caruso and a private performance for Puccini.

- Italy just may be coming to grips with its past. A grandmother named Raffaella Duelli finally reached the hearts of Italy's political leadership with her autobiog-

HEIR TO INDIA

Her name and face have appeared on this page a number of times as her prominence grew. She is Sonia Gandhi, widow of slain Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. We follow her life because she is Italian by birth and heritage and a major player in the politics of a subcontinent, the most populace (nearly a billion) democracy in the world.



Called out of her seclusion by the former ruling Congress Party, the party of Nehru, Indira Gandhi and her own late husband, Mrs. Gandhi has embarked on a political campaign to win popular support for the party. She does so in the national interest. India has suffered from a proliferation of splinter parties — some 14 make up the current ruling coalition. And although she has refrained from seeking office (elections were held in February and March) many crowds have hailed her as "Prime Minister Sonia".

Of course, there are those who would be appalled by a foreigner holding such power but we can, for now, savor the idea of an Italian lady at the head of such a great nation as India. *Forza Sonia!*



raphy, *Grandmother, You Who Fought in the War* (1996). It is the story of an almost 18-year old Raffaella who volunteered to serve in Mussolini's Republican forces in 1944 to defend Italy from the Allied invasion. She sustained injuries on the battlefield at Anzio and was eventually taken prisoner. After the war she and her veteran husband collected the bodies of hundreds of unknown Republican soldiers killed at Anzio that were improperly buried and reinterred them in her family cemetery. Her burning wish was to have the Italian government establish a new military cemetery at Nettuno, near Anzio, to honor these heroic dead. But she had to contend with the forces of controversy until recently. Her efforts were finally rewarded when Italy's Ministry of Defense authorized the transfer of the bodies to a tomb of the Unknown Soldier in the new *Campo della Memoria* cemetery in Nettuno. This remarkable grandmother has singlehandedly closed a sad chapter of history, and opened a brighter one.

OLYMPIC FIRSTS

Once again, the Italic athlete showed the right stuff in Nagano, Japan. Italy's superstar Deborah Compagnoni clinched her third gold medal in this her third Olympics, a first in Alpine Olympic history (male or female). Canada's bad boy (pot smoking) Ross Rebagliati copped the Olympic's first-ever gold in snowboarding. And the first United States Women's Hockey Team won the gold under the lead-

ership of Captain Cammi (Catherine) Granato of Downers Grove, IL. Overall, Italy's national team placed in the top ten of all competing nations, tying host Japan with 10 medals.

Also note, the Olympic Committee recently announced that Torino, Italy, will host the 2006 winter games.

TIMES ARE A'CHANGING

- The Italians have already surpassed the British in economic prowess but now these spunky lads want to tackle, literally that is, the whole British Isles in rugby. The International Rugby Board has agreed to allow Italy to enter the Five Nations rugby union in 2000. The Italians apparently have mastered the sport that so far has been exclusive to England, France, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland, no doubt due to their Celtic origins (remember, France was once called Gaul). But wasn't northern Italy once called Cisalpine Gaul because of an ancient Celtic occupation? Rugby may still be in the "family."

- Italy's Prime Minister Romano Prodi has proclaimed that the nation is fiscally prepared to join the European monetary union. Having gotten its budget deficit down to the required 3% of gross domestic product, Prodi is fighting a public relations war against anti-Italian forces within Germany. Some Teutonic gnomes feel that Italy has a questionable economic record and may drag Europe down once the *lira*, *mark*, and *franc* are converted to *euros*.

Meanwhile, Germany has been caught cooking the books a few times to get their deficit down. The good news in March was that Italy made the first draft.

- The harsh terms of surrender that Italy had to

swallow at the close of World War II are not sitting well with many Italians today. Forced by Yugoslav terror and by an Allied *dictat* from ancestral lands around the city of Trieste (the Istrian peninsula), Italian refugees were promised just compensation for their losses. To date, neither Slovenia or Croatia, the new spin-offs of Yugoslavia which now possess this region, has made good its promise. Thousands of displaced Italians have protested the injustice demanding that the Italian Republic block Slovenia's entry into the European Community this year until accounts have been settled. Sounds like WWII isn't over after all.

A MATTER OF HEALTH

- The ubiquitous tomato may be the best part of your diet if you fear cancer and heart attacks. The stuff that makes tomatoes red, lycopene, is now pushing beta carotene off the wonder food list. Move over carrots! Researchers are proclaiming tomato sauce, that's right, sauce is better than even fresh tomatoes for your health. Good news for the hungry!

- Neuroscientist Daniele Piomelli has discovered the human brain molecule that mimics the positive effects of marijuana. The find now clears the way for future pain relief and appetite stimulation without having to use the hallucinogenic weed.

- Dr. Carl Rossi has successfully field-tested his proton-beam therapy on prostate cancer patients in California (Loma Linda University). Using protons instead of traditional radiation protects the body's healthy tissue. It is as effective as surgical removal in controlling prostate cancer at least four years after treatment.

- Two of the gay community's most prominent authors, Gabriel Rotello and Michelangelo Signorile, have published new books condemning the revival of the reckless sex culture among homosexuals. A new generation of gays no longer fears AIDS and has returned to the unsafe practices of the 60's and 70's.



First-ever Gold in Snowboarding went to Ross Rebagliati.



EDITORIALS

THE FUTURE COMES IN A SMALL PACKAGE

Another *Aurora* year is under our belt. Over 200 youngsters of varying ethnic backgrounds were exposed to Italic culture, many probably for the first time in their lives. Thanks to the efforts of *Aurora* Director Tony De Nonno and Center Coordinator John Misso our program reached five counties and obtained grants from the Italian government and the National Italian American Foundation

Italic people are supposedly fond of children yet how many organizations would even deal with pre-teens? I vividly remember some eleven years ago when we started *Aurora* how we were warned that kids were nothing but trouble and not worth our effort to teach them Italian culture. Let's face it, it's easier to give an 18-year old a \$500 scholarship and wave good-bye than to entertain and teach a roomful of 11-year olds the Italian language and history. Only our Institute has accomplished this on a mass scale. It is a very positive achievement.

Two hundred children today can mean 400 or 4,000 tomorrow. These small lives are the future that many of us have overlooked. They deserve more attention, more resources, more programs. These young minds deserve more than lip service, mafia movies, and benign neglect. *Aurora* can be the path to a great Italic culture, one based on the positive and constructive elements of our enviable legacy.

Aurora must open the minds of American youth just as *The Italic Way* opens the minds of adults. Support it! Promote it!

- JLM

A WORLD GONE MAD

Only a quarter of the way through the new year and the stereotypes have become even more entrenched.

For his second-term inaugural gala the Mayor of New York, Rudy Giuliani threw himself a party for 1,500 celebrants that featured his favorite movie, *The Godfather*. A month later, carrying his Mob obsession to Michigan for a political fundraiser Hizzoner, broke into his now famous Don Corleone routine during a speech to Middle Americans, just in case the wolverines haven't connected mobsters with Italian-Americans after 30 years of feature films. For-

tunately, Hizzoner didn't appear in drag as the Italian mamma, a role he created for *Saturday Nite Live*. Pride runs deep!

Displaying a courage that has thus far eluded most Italo-American organizations, France's gendarmes rounded up wiseguy-wannabe Bobby DeNiro for 16 hours of questioning concerning a sex-for-cash prostitution ring. Bobby "You talkin' to me" DeNiro has vowed never to return to the land of the Bastille. Moreover, he has threatened to return his French Legion of Honor Medal (fat chance) as a political statement. (touchy touchy) Although not formally charged with any crimes, DeNiro was clearly ruffled by his treatment at the hands of the Paris police. Perhaps DeNiro's many years of portraying mobsters have made him a likely target of law enforcement officials everywhere. *Vive La France!!!*

Elsewhere on the Continent the Italians are beginning to understand the ultimate price of bad image. Both President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro and Prime Minister Romano Prodi protested Britain's "insulting" selection of the pizza as the national symbol of Italy on the European Union's logo. The unflappable Brits blamed a panel of school children for the choice of national symbols and refused to change it "....no insult of any kind was intended." Ireland's symbol is an emerald star; Austria boasts musical notes, Germany has a forest and others display national flags or colors. But the cradle of civilization must settle for a regular cheese pie.

Finally, Italian-American activists in Chicago were vindicated when a despised sports columnist was caught in *lapsus linguae* verbally bashing Italian athletes at the Olympics. The culprit, Steve Rosenbloom, had previously written an unflattering story in the *Chicago Tribune* about basketball coach Rick Pitino, juxtaposing a photo of the talented coach beside one of Sammy "the Bull" Gravano (murderer and turncoat) alluding to a recent career move by Pitino. Scores of irate Italian-Americans picketed the *Tribune* demanding Rosenbloom's apology — which never came. Pan to Nagano, Japan. Rosenbloom is on the air describing an Italian skier coming down the slope and crashing into a wall and later flown to a hospital. Asked to name the skier, Rosenbloom could only think of *The Godfather* character Luca Brasi to which the stateside anchor responded, "Oh, you mean he sleeps with the fishes?" This time, there was an apology.

Does anyone see a pattern here?

- RAI

Forum of the People



Cause for Pride

by Robert Allegrini

Family values are synonymous with Italians and it is truly unfortunate that the same cannot be said of large segments of our own countrymen.

At one point or another, almost everyone who is seriously involved in the Italian-American community has been queried as to why he or she spends so much time, money and effort promoting Italian culture and civilization. For me, the answer to this question is extremely simple: I think America would be a better place if only it were more Italian in character.

While each and every American ethnic group has made its own valuable contributions to the culture of our magnificent country, I cannot help but believe that a further extension of the values and virtues of those noble heirs of the Roman Empire and the Renaissance would have a profoundly beneficial effect on America. To substantiate this seemingly chauvinistic claim an examination of the evidence is in order.

We begin with the obvious:

If America were only a little more Italian we would all be better fed. Survey after survey now indicates that Italian is the world's favorite type food. Naturally, we would also be better dressed for Milan is rivaled only by Paris as a capital of the fashion world.

As a race, Americans would be more musical, lest we forget that Italian is the very language of music. Correspondingly, we would also be more artistic: as UNESCO notes, more than 50 percent of the world's art is found in Italy.

I am also confident that if Americans were a little more Italian they would be more passionate and more tolerant of amorous peccadillos. It is certainly no coincidence that the greatest sex symbols of all time, from Romeo to Valentino to Fabio, have all been Italian.

But beyond these easily discernible reasons why America would benefit from being more Italian lie several more complex but no less compelling reasons:

The first of these reasons is that the Italians have a comparatively lower incidence of many of the social woes that plague America, among which are alcoholism, child abuse and divorce. Can you even imagine a nation that cherishes its children as much as Italy having so many incidents of child abuse as here?

As a second reason, I would submit the benefits derived from the nurturing environment of the typical Italian family. I once read an American guidebook on Italy that stated that the "defining characteristic" of the Italian male was "an unnatural closeness to his mother." Unnatural to whom? Perhaps to someone named Smith or Jones but certainly to no one who bears a proud Italian surname. The truth is that many non-Italian Americans in our country would be far more socially well adjusted if they had the benefit of a close-knit Italian upbringing where the parents sacrificed everything for their children's advancement and the bonds of love run so deep that they actually appear "unnatural" to those who were unfortunately denied these bonds. In an era where even the American political left has admitted that Dan Quayle was right with regard to family values, we must acknowledge that the Italians were right all along. Family values are synonymous with Italians and it is truly unfortunate that the

same cannot be said of large segments of our own countrymen.

Another paramount reason why America would benefit from an emulation of the Italians is the Italian *Dolce Vita* mindset. Too often we Americans (Americans of Italian descent included) are so focused on work that we neglect what is truly important in our lives: our friends and our family. Italians have a far greater appreciation of this fact which is reflected in everything from their long meals and vacation schedules to their comparatively smaller incidence of work related stress. Although hard work is a basic Italian trait, Italians know how to enjoy their leisure in simple ways.

Only the constraints of space preclude me from continuing to examine why America would be a better place if it were only a little more Italian. Conversely, I must state, in all fairness, that there is just as much the Italians can learn and extrapolate from America to make Italy a better country. Foremost among these things are a greater sense of patriotism, civic pride and ecology.

In the global marketplace of ideas there is a great deal to be traded between Italy and America. Therefore, I hope that the national Italian-American community will emerge as enthusiastic brokers for all positive aspects of the magnificent Italian culture.

Robert Allegrini is currently Vice President pro tempore of the Italic Studies Institute and resides in Chicago.



Italian American Radio

Words, music that explain where we're going, where we've been

by Bob Masullo

Reporting on Italian American radio always comes as a surprise to some. They find it hard to believe it exists, especially in this day and age. Yet there are Italian American radio programs on stations throughout the United States. What's more, they have been there virtually since Guglielmo Marconi invented the medium.

It is, however, unfortunately true, as Christopher Newton noted in the Winter 1996 issue of *Italian Americana* magazine, that Italian American programs have had to work "as a minor partner in cooperation with larger radio networks; Italian Americans as an ethnic group have not by and large gone out and acquired radio stations and then with complete autonomy decided on the nature of the programming."

Actually, the only other ethnic groups that have acquired stations in significant numbers (other than WASPs, of course) are Hispanics and, to a lesser extent, African Americans. That's why there is no shortage of Hispanic radio (and TV) in most parts of the United States, and African American radio has at least a foothold in most major metropolitan markets.

If one wonders why Italian Americans don't get a better shake in the national media, this is one of the more important reasons why. Even at this late date our community could be well served if wealthy Italian Americans copied the Hispanic/African American models — provided, of course, their Italic consciences had been raised first.

Despite the alien environment in which Italian American broadcasters have had to work, they have been able to produce some radio programs of notable quality, many with considerable staying power and remarkably loyal followings.

I know. I have been involved with one for 16 years: *Festa Italiana* in Sacramento, California, which airs Sundays from noon to 1 p.m. on KJAY (1430 AM).

Admittedly, Sacramento does not leap to mind as a bastion of *italo-americanità*; the way a San Francisco, Chicago, or, most certainly, New York does. But Italics account for five percent of metropolitan Sacramento's 1.1 million people — that's 55,000 souls, not counting italophiles without an Italian heritage, of whom there are many that regularly listen to *Festa Italiana*.

The point is: Even places you might not think of as particularly Italian support Italian American radio. Besides Sacramento, that includes such "Anglo" cities as Portland, OR; Detroit, MI; Washington, DC; and Bridgeport, CT.

Bridgeport, in fact, has one of the biggest, most successful Italian American radio programs in the nation — John La Barca's *Italian House Party*. It runs for five hours every Sunday (9 a.m.-2 p.m.) on



John La Barca of *Italian House Party*.

WICC (600 AM). Because of Bridgeport's geographical location, the show is able to reach not only Connecticut's sizable Italic population, but additional millions on New York's Long Island.

What is Italian American radio? A bridge between two cultures? An effective means of communicating our concerns to one another? A way of reaching out to other ethnic groups? A trip down an ethnic memory lane?

The truth is, it is all of these and much more.

"In order to understand where we are going, we have to have a strong knowledge of where we came from," said La Barca, when asked to explain his program. "My show, I hope, helps supply that knowledge. I like to think I make people — our people in particular, but all people really — feel that there is hope."

In other words, Italian American radio (along with all other Italian American media, including *The Italic Way*) is the mortar of Italian American culture. But radio is an exceptionally personal medium. It, literally, talks to you — in your car, in your bedroom, everywhere you may go — like an *amico*.

La Barca's show, as its name suggests, attempts to create the mood of a large family gathering in which everyone has a good time —



Italian American Radio

Continued from page 10

singing, dancing, telling jokes and recalling pleasant memories. Consequently, in addition to his own voice, listeners have often heard his great aunt Mary, his mother Mamie, and numerous other relatives and friends. It's also reflected in the music he plays.

But sandwiched between the fun are spoken segments designed to advance Italic pride. For example, "Growing Up Italian," a 12-minute recitation that reviews the unique pleasures and pains of growing up Italian American in the '40s, '50s and '60s, which he recorded (with musical backing by The Gaylords) and frequently plays on his show.

Unlike many of the older Italian American shows, which were immigrant run, aimed at an immigrant audience and announced in Italian, La Barca's show is done in English.

Says La Barca: "I'm second generation. Like most Italian Americans, English is my first language. When the immigrants came here and had children they formed a new culture — heavily Italian influenced, of course, but different from Italian culture. That's what I try to present, the new culture. So I do the show in English with just a little bit of spoken Italian thrown in for flavoring."

On *Festa Italiana* we also do most announcing in English, save for when John Adamo, who co-founded the show with me, hosts it (every six weeks or so). He likes to demonstrate his Italian fluency. But that, too, reflects the modern Italian American community, a few of whose members have taken

the time to master the ancestral tongue — and inspire the rest of us.

There are, however, still immigrant shows. New York and Chicago have many. But they are not nearly as well represented as they were back in the '40s and '50s. At one time, the now sadly defunct New York station WOV broadcast all day, every day, in Italian.

Tina Conforti, to cite one host of a present-day immigrant show, does her *Italia Oggi* (Sundays, 10-11 a.m. on WCEV, 1450 AM, Chicago) entirely in Italian. The only exception is when she has a non-Italian-speaking guest; during the 1996 presidential campaign, for example, she interviewed both Bill Clinton and Robert Dole in English — but translated their remarks into Italian.

Conforti, who has roots in *Toscana* and *Campania* ("I'm a blend of *il nord* and *il sud*," she says proudly), sees her mission as "getting the news out to Italians, who like me, are living abroad."

Lisa Bica Grodsky's Detroit area *Radio Italiana*, that aired on both WCAR and WLLZ, was an example of a later-generation show. Past tense is used because the show is (as this is written) on hiatus; the 29-year-old Bica Grodsky being pregnant with her first child. She planned to go back on the air shortly after giving birth on a yet to be determined station.

"It was mainly a Top 40 show," she said. "I played a few vintage tunes, a few Italian American numbers, but mainly, the songs were ones people were currently listening to in Italy. I tried to keep right on top of the charts. I'd read *Billboard* every week."

Bica Grodsky's show grew out of her



Phyllis Cupparo and the author, radio hosts of *Festa Italiana* in Sacramento.

involvement with the Italian Study Group of Troy, MI. She headed *Oggi*, a division of the group that specialized in the interests of Italian Americans in the 18- to 40-year-old bracket.

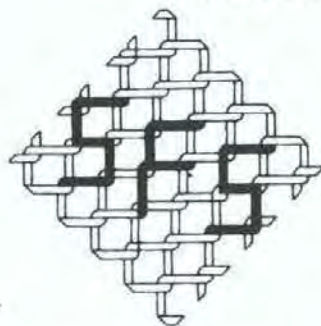
Festa Italiana developed in a similar fashion. Both Adamo and I were early members of the Italian Cultural Society of Sacramento, which was organized in 1981. One of the organization's goals was to make Italian Americans a more visible part of the greater Sacramento area. What better way to achieve that, we reasoned, than a radio program? By the end of 1982 we were on the air.

Lucia Galizia, an immigrant from Napoli, ten years ago took over *The Italian Hour* (10-11 a.m. Sundays on KKEY, 1150 AM, in Portland, OR), a program that was founded in 1948 by Agostino Podesto (which may make it the oldest, continuously-operated Italian American program in the United States).

"It's somewhere in the middle," she said. "We aim at both immigrants and later gener-

Continued on page 30

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Imperial Italy

by John Mancini

Among the many misconceptions about Ancient Rome is that this small, landlocked city on seven hills, on its own, managed to conquer the western world over a period of 700 years and hold it for another 500 years.

Think of the population it would have needed to field countless legions over a millennium. Think of the logistical nightmare Rome would have had merely to keep "occupied" Italy pacified for hundreds of years while the flower of its manhood went about conquering the "world." Look no further than Athens or Sparta for a perfect example of the limitations of a city-state. Greater Greece was neither a true empire nor the creation of one city-state. Alexander the Great's conquest of the Near East in the name of Greek culture lasted a mere 30 years. Neither the Greek homeland nor Macedonia's overseas possessions remained united any longer than the lifespan of Alexander. Was it possible, then, for one city in Italy to accomplish what the clever Greeks had failed to achieve?



Spectator and betting sports were perfected by the ancient Italians. Here, a champion charioteer is shown on a mosaic.

WHO WERE THE ROMANS?

The Roman Empire was, more correctly, an Italo-Roman Empire. For Rome needed a nation to create its empire. Alone, the task was beyond its manpower and resources. The reason it is called the

Roman Empire is because as Rome made its political alliances throughout the Italian peninsula it extended Roman citizenship to its Italic cousins, hence, Italians became "Romans". Oftentimes, the true Romans referred to themselves as *Quirites*. (Even today, the President of Italy resides on the Quirinal Hill in Rome.) Virgil, Italy's poet laureate about the time of Christ, put it very simply: the Roman Empire was the result of "the power of Roman stock allied to the valor of Italy." (*Sit Romana potens Itala virtute propago.*)

Unquestionably, the Romans used their

Imperial Italy utilized colonies of Italians to project its power.

Italic cousins as cannon fodder over the years but eventually there was a reckoning and it was then that Europe's first nation-state was born (See *Italy's Civil War* on page 19.)

Although the old Romans liked to maintain the legend that they were descended from Trojans, they nevertheless admitted that their wandering Trojan antecedents intermarried with the Italic natives. Latin, the language of ancient Rome, is actually classified as an Italic language related to the old languages of Lazio, Umbria, Abruzzo, Campania, and many other Italian regions. But sharing the same blood and language do not guarantee unity. Unlike the individualistic ancient Hellenes (Greeks) these Italic cousins eventually shared their citizenship rights and obligations in common. Italy became the homeland of the Romans. As British historian Donald Dudley put it, "...by the time of Augustus men could speak of Rome and Italy as a unity."



The Romans divided the unified homeland into eleven administrative regions closely resembling today's twenty regions. Sicily and Sardinia were provinces.

Once unified, Imperial Italy became the cutting edge of civilization. It was a new civilization, forged from the Greek culture as represented in southern Italy by the Hellenic colonies (*Magna Graecia*, Greater Greece, as the Romans called those coastal enclaves in Sicily and the peninsula), the Etruscan culture of central Italy, and the Italic culture. Here was a new combination of values: the Greek appreciation for art and the abstract, Etruscan humanism, and the hard pragmatism and sense of justice of the Italic people. Imperial Italy now brought to the world stage new virtues that would facilitate empire. Rome was more tolerant and less clannish than the Hellenic city-states. In time, it allowed assimilation to all. And unlike empires elsewhere it served its subject peoples with a vital infrastructure — roads, sanitation, and social services — and with the rule of law.

In the matter of holding together a vast empire that covered the area of the United States and contained some 80 million



inhabitants of diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds, Imperial Italy utilized colonies of Italians to project its power. "Wherever the Roman conquers, there he dwells," stated Seneca, himself born in Spain of Italic lineage. But while the Greeks planted colonies that mirrored the regionalism of their own city-states, the ancient Italian colonies were made up of assimilated army veterans rather than transplanted regions. Julius Caesar established about 30 overseas colonies utilizing 80,000 Italian veteran families. Augustus proudly reported that he had founded 75 colonies around the Mediterranean. The most famous and fruitful of all the ancient Italian colonies was in Spain. It was a new city called, logically enough, Italica, and it produced two of the Empire's greatest emperors: Trajan and Hadrian.

With colonies such as Italica came Roman law and citizenship, not to mention the magnificent building programs that Italy was famous for. Over the years, these overseas Italians would intermarry with the natives or introduce them to the advantages



The Roman Forum was the center of law and government for the western world.

of Italic civilization. So vital were these Italian colonies that many still survive: London, Budapest, Vienna, Beirut, Seville, Augsburg, Lyons, Istanbul, among others.

OUR DEBT TO CLASSICAL ITALY

Imagine a world without Rome and you will soon grasp the legacy of Imperial Italy to our modern world. Were we to reverse the course of history and allow Carthage to defeat Rome two millennia before Christ, and were we to allow the German hordes to overrun Gaul, Spain and Italy at the time of Christ, what sort of cornerstone would "western civilization" have today? What nation would have been the bearer of the arts and sciences of the fragmented Greeks,



The emperor was protected by the Praetorian Guard made up of Italians who were at least six foot tall.

if not Italy? Would Judeo-Christian morality have been disseminated so thoroughly were there no *Pax Romana* (the 200 years of Roman Peace)? Judaism and Christianity would probably still be mysterious eastern cults had there not been the free travel and the unifying languages (Latin and Greek) of the empire. And, would Italian humanism have been instilled in the savage breast of western Europe without the stability of Roman government and law? The Greek states themselves might have been obliterated by the northern barbarians if Italic legions had not defended the Danube. Historian Will Durant summed up Rome's (Italy's) essential accomplishment:

"...having won the Mediterranean world she adopted its culture, gave it order, prosperity, and peace for 200 years, held back the tide of barbarism for two centuries more, and transmitted the classic heritage to the West before she died."

But what of all the little things that we now take for granted that were bequeathed to us by Imperial Italy: the calendar, the Roman alphabet, tripartite government, the rule of law, construction technology, city planning, team sports and sports stadiums, agricultural science (Italians planted the first vineyards in ancient Gaul), the instruments of capitalism: contract law, letters of credit, risk insurance, usury laws, stock issues, and banking. The foundation of Italy's economic success during the Middle

Ages can be traced to Imperial Italy. In the arts, it was Classical Italy that developed landscape painting, satire in literature and realism in sculpture. Even the Madonna and Child theme came from pre-Christian Italy when the nurturing female was known as the Earth Mother. Sayings that we now take for granted came out of this period: *All roads lead to Rome, Rome wasn't built in a day, Beware Greeks bearing gifts, Home sweet home, Love conquers all, Quality not quantity, Not worth his salt, No sooner said than done, Head over heels, Hail and farewell, More brawn than brain, Buyer beware, Beware the dog.*

For those who stand in awe of the diverse genius of Italians today and of the sixty generations that were produced since the fall of the western Roman Empire — generations that produced composers, soldiers, scientists, saints, engineers, explorers, businessmen, athletes, authors, singers, and myriad other skills — should acknowledge the reason for it. Imperial Italy, in the



Ara Pacis Augustae (Altar of Augustan Peace). The symbol of Italian unity and dominion. Long buried, it was unearthed in 1938 and now stands beside the Tiber River.

course of five hundred years, attracted the finest talent of three continents to its shores. Just as the United States, a beacon for universal migration, leads the world in numerous fields, the ancient Italian gene pool was enriched with such ethnic diversity as was not seen in the world until America opened its doors.

Without Imperial Italy the so-called "Italian genius" would probably not exist.

THE OTHER ITALY

This is not to say that Imperial Italy didn't have its dark side. The carnage of the arena, pervasive slavery, and often brutal conquests were truly part of the whole picture of ancient Italy. Movies like *Ben*

Continued on page 15



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DESMOND J. BURKE

Imperial Italy

Continued from page 13

Hur, *Spartacus*, and *The Robe* defined the Roman Empire for the modern public as a cruel pagan blot on human history. Of course, this point of view served the interests of latter day dramatists. The ancient Italians were, in fact, no worse than their contemporaries in Europe, Africa, or the Near East. Julius Caesar was considered humane by ancient standards because he refrained from murdering women and children during his conquest of Gaul. One has only to read the Bible to learn how the Israelites annihilated Canaanite populations. Similarly, the Greeks raped and pillaged each other with fierce cruelty. The Carthaginians practiced child sacrifice to placate their gods. The Romans actually learned crucifixion from the Carthaginians and gladiatorial combat from the Etruscans. Those who would judge harshly ancient Italy must place that judgement in the context of the times.

The Italic people came by their empire, at first, for reasons of defense. Ancient Celts once occupied northern Italy and in 390 BC laid siege to the young city of Rome. The Italic people needed the Alps as a defensive line and the conquest of northern Italy became a necessity for this purpose. Likewise, the Hellenic cities of *Magna Graecia* feared the coarse Romans and called in their Greek cousins to keep these Italic upstarts in line. A Greek king named Pyrrhus invaded Italy and thrashed the Romans in every battle, losing so many men in the process that the phrase "a Pyrrhic victory" came into our lexicon. The end result was Rome's absorption of all southern Italy. However, it was the Roman author Horace who observed that *conquered Greece took captive her conqueror*. In other words, Greek culture seduced the coarse Italians.

And so it went that in her own defense Italy confronted and vanquished one enemy after another. Then again, the Italic people were also a covetous lot and the need for gold, silver, slaves, and markets pressed the legions on to greater conquests. With the conquests came the Italian businessmen and publicans (tax collectors).

They were a particularly unpopular lot especially among the entrepreneurial Greeks who had previously colonized the Near East. These representatives of Roman authority taught the Greeks how to squeeze blood from stones.

Oftentimes, as in Gaul, the desire for personal glory and political power was the motivation. The great Caesar even wrote his commentaries on the Gallic War to further his reputation and political base, writing them in the third person to make them seem unbiased.

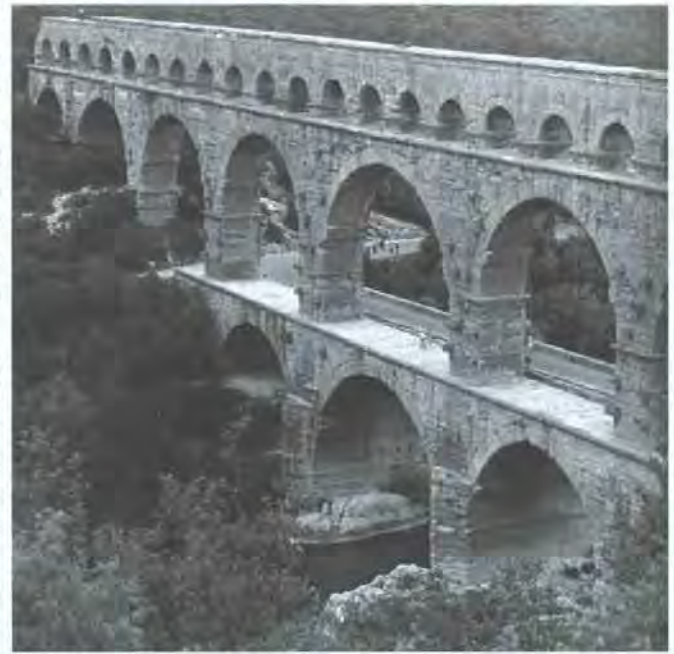
In some cases, Rome was invited into a foreign country to forestall a civil war. However, once invited in, the Romans rarely departed. Such was the case in Judea. Yet, the Romans took possession of Pergamum in Turkey because they were named in the dying ruler's will in 133 B.C.

RUNNING AN EMPIRE

As the Emperor Augustus observed, it is not quite as difficult to conquer an empire as to maintain one. In this regard, Augustus was the superior of Alexander. The Macedonian's empire only lasted some 30 years, whereas Imperial Italy, established by Augustus, lasted nearly 500 years, two hundred of which are known as the *Pax Romana*, the Roman Peace, when the empire of 80 million enjoyed relative peace. British historian Gibbon said of this peace,

"If a man were called to fix the period in the history of the world, during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous, he would, without hesitation, name that which elapsed from 96 A.D. to 180 A.D."

Once conquered the subject people came to understand the benefits of peace and cooperation. Except for the security needs of the more recalcitrant provinces, Italy's legions were based along the frontiers, away from the pacified core. It is



Roman engineers scoffed at Egyptians and Greeks for their "useless" memorials. They built aqueducts and roads, instead. (This aqueduct is in France.)

somewhat amazing to consider that a mere 30 legions (150,000 men) were under arms to defend an empire that covered three continents. They were supplemented with an equal number of local auxiliaries. Nevertheless, this is about 55% of today's U.S. Army strength.

Tolerance, equality, and participation were the secrets of Rome's success. Tolerance for local customs and religions, equality through the granting of Italic, Latin, or Roman rights despite ethnic background (these bestowed various degrees of citizenship in the early empire but were later blended into just Roman citizenship). President John F. Kennedy's *Ich bin ein Berliner* was a conscious paraphrase of the ancient *Cives Romanus Sum* (I am a Roman Citizen), a phrase which could release you from jail, stop torture, and prevent your crucifixion. Finally, participation encompassed not only political representation in the Roman Senate and Assembly but economic freedom that eventually enriched the provinces at the expense of the Italian economy.

English historian Ronald Syme has suggested that England might have avoided the American revolution had it copied Italy's inclusion of provincials in governing the Empire. George Washington would have been a member of Parliament, Patrick

Continued on page 16



Imperial Italy

Continued from page 15

Henry would have been the governor of Virginia, and Ben Franklin a member of the Royal Academy. On the other hand, it might be said that some historians believe this generous participation by the provincials led to the social and economic degradation of Italy, which in turn caused the collapse of the Empire. Maybe a conqueror can be too generous.

With the economic boom throughout the provinces came education for the masses. The Romans developed public school systems, public libraries, and professional certifications. Believe it or not, England under Roman rule had a higher rate of literacy than any British government for the next 14 centuries! That is according to author T.R. Reid who quoted English historian Peter Salway.

ACCESSING IMPERIAL ITALY

Clearly, we know more about the ancient Italians and their subjects than any other people of the distant past. More information was disseminated in those years and more has come down to us than any other ancient civilizations. Unfortunately, the high rate of literacy throughout the Empire gave even the gossip mongers a wide audience, and this before the invention of the printing press! Much of our "dirt" on Rome and its ruling class came from questionable authors like Suetonius whose *Lives of the Twelve Caesars* freely explored the private affairs of marginal emperors like

Tiberius, Nero, and Caligula. It would be equivalent to relying on contemporary author Seymour Hirst to be the final word on President Kennedy. Was there a Caligula among the Egyptian pharaohs, or a Nero among the emperors of China? Surely there were, but there was no free press in those civilizations. So, we mustn't think the Romans morally inferior to anyone.

Even the persecution of Christians was not a constant policy of imperial administrations. In fact, Christianity thrived under Italic dominion. As numbers go, who could say if more innocent Christians were murdered during the Roman Empire or during the Inquisition and Reformation?

Unquestionably, Imperial Italy established Western Civilization — that unique blend of Greek thought, Italic humanism, and Judeo-Christian morality — in the time it ruled the west. It inculcated a reverence for law, an appreciation for peace, and the concept that government serves the people. The Romans built roads not monuments, aqueducts not pyramids. By surviving as long as it did and by developing the bone and sinew of a capitalist empire, Imperial Italy preserved the mechanisms that would energize the commerce of the Middle Ages and later inspire the Renaissance. For these



The Baths of Caracalla in Rome became the model for many American train terminals. The ancient Italians conquered "space" with their domes and arches.

things did not happen of their own accord.

And because Italians colonized much of the western world, most of us, not only today's Italic people, can claim a direct link with Imperial Italy. Its contributions have touched, in one way or another, all six inhabited continents and provide us with a framework for global unity. *Ave Italia veteres!**

(*Hail ancient Italy!)

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Giovanni Schiavo

Father of Italian-American History

by Adolfo Caso

"...Italian-American organizations didn't give me a plugged nickel."

In his waning years, Giovanni Schiavo did not hide his bitterness toward the community to which he had devoted a lifetime of research and study. Were it not for his relentless pursuit of historical truth, the Italian-American past would be a mere confirmation of Hollywood's distorted images. He single-handedly preserved our rich and varied heritage here in America and for this alone he deserves our undying gratitude.

Born in Castellamare (Trapani, Sicily) in 1898, Schiavo grew up in the mold of fellow Sicilians Luigi Pirandello and Salvatore Quasimodo, both Nobel Prize winners, but Schiavo never received a prize of any kind. Yet, if it weren't for him, Americans of Italian descent would today lack the foundation of a great heritage. For the first eighteen

years of his life he was raised and educated in the highest Italian ideals. It prepared him better than the vast majority of immigrants to preserve and nurture the remarkable civilization that was Italy.

Arriving in America in 1916, he attended Johns Hopkins University, New York University, and Columbia. He was awarded four scholarships by Johns Hopkins and a Gilder fellowship by Columbia, the latter enabling him to study international law and relations in Europe.

While in New York, and later in Texas, he authored *The Italians in Chicago*, *The Italians in America Before the Civil War*, and two volumes of *Italian-American History*. His major accomplishments were to come in the following works: *What Crime Statistics Show About the Italians*; *The Scientific Achievements of Leonardo da Vinci*; his masterpiece, *Four Centuries of Italian-American History* (which went into five editions while he was alive); his groundbreaking and controversial volume,



Antonio Meucci, Inventor of the Telephone, a work that shows precision of research and editorial courage in bringing out the facts surrounding the legitimacy of Meucci as the inventor of the telephone; *The Truth About the Mafia and Organized Crime in America*, a work that showed how the Italian Americans are wilfully stigmatized by the media when, in fact, they had an overall lower crime rate than that of other ethnic groups. He also completed the *Dictionary for Travelers*, in eight languages, and the *Italian-American Who's Who* which has seen twenty editions.

Notwithstanding his love of research, bound to a strong sense of personal vindication for his forgotten and down-

Continued on page 21

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Forging A Nation: Italy's Civil War

by Alfred Cardone

There is, today, but one Italy
and Rome was ITS CREATOR.

From the founding of the Eternal City on April 21st, 753 B.C., the Romans were in almost constant struggle with their fellow Italic people and the Etruscans, both natives of the peninsula. They, and the Greek colonies of the south and the invading Celts of the north stood in the way of a Roman Italy.

With the defeat of the invading Greek king Pyrrhus and his mercenary army in 275 B.C., the fate of the Hellenic colonies in southern Italy (collectively called *Magna Graecia* - Greater Greece) was sealed. Rome reigned supreme in three-quarters of Italy. It had established an interlocking network of alliances in her dealings with the various Italic peoples that surrounded the Greek colonies. A small number, like some of the Latin tribes and the Sabines who inhabited the region of Latium, around Rome, were granted full Roman citizenship. Others in central and south Italy, including the Samnites, Aequi, Volsci and Umbrians, were given a sort of half-citizenship without the right to vote or hold office in Rome. The submissive Greek cities of the south became allied states. Collectively, all of the additions to the Roman confederacy became known as "Italian allies" or "*socii Italici*."

They formed an outer orbit around the more fully privileged Latin tribes.

Rome very wisely allowed the vast majority of the Italic people the right to keep their own constitutions and elect their own magistrates. They were permitted to worship their own gods and could enter into contracts and even marry with Roman citizens. They were not required to pay any tribute to Rome. They were, however, obligated to supply men to the Roman army and

*The Italian allies
proved to be
crucial to the con-
tinued survival and
growth of Rome*

had the duty of serving in Roman wars. It was an arrangement that was astonishingly enlightened for the ancient world. The Italian allies proved to be crucial to the continued survival and



A coin issued by the Italian Confederacy shows the Italian bull goring the Roman wolf.

growth of Rome, sharing in the common dangers and victories and playing an ever increasing role in Rome's military campaigns. The loyal and heroic participation of these Italian allies in the defensive wars against Hannibal, Greeks, Celts, and Germans in the years before Christ was critical to Rome's victories and Italy's survival.

For years the Italian allies had strived to achieve equal treatment and full Roman citizenship as a reward for their loyalty. Roman reformers such as Marcus Fulvius Flaccus, Gaius and Tiberius Gracchus and Lucius Saturninus had held out hope for this prospect, however, each time promises of reform and eager expectations ended in bitter disappointment.

"The beasts of the field and the birds of the air have their holes and hiding places; but the men who fight and die for Italy enjoy only the light and the air.... You are called masters of the world, but there is not a foot of ground that you can call your own." -Tiberius Gracchus, 133 B.C.

Cruelly, the Roman aristocracy refused to give serious consideration to any proposal involving the expansion of full citizenship. Tensions increased in 126 B.C. with the passage of a law



which forbade the inhabitants of the Italian towns to migrate to Rome. A decree of 95 B.C. even expelled all residents of the capital whose citizenship was merely Italian but not Roman. The just claims of Rome's allies could not be denied much longer without the threat of an explosive conflict.

Events reached a climax in 91 B.C. during the tribuneship of Marcus Livius Drusus who gallantly took up the cause of reform. He proposed to divide additional state lands among the poor, to restore exclusive jury rights to the Senate, to add 300 *equites*, or knights, to the Senate, and most importantly, to confer full Roman citizenship upon all the freemen of Italy. Before Drusus could achieve the passage of his reform program, he was stabbed to death by an unknown assassin. His murder convinced the Italians that the Roman aristocracy would never peacefully consent to share its privileges and was the proximate cause for the outbreak of hostilities. The Italian people would gain their rights of equal treatment as full citizens only through war.

The rugged people of the highlands of central and southern Italy rose up in revolt, among them the Marsi, the Paeligni, the Samnites and the Lucanians. The Latin colonies of Etruria and Umbria, however, refused to join. An Italian Confederacy was formed with its capital at Corfinium, proudly renamed Italica, in the modern Abruzzo. A constitution was drafted similar to Rome's with a Senate of five hundred, an Assembly and a magistracy under which all Italians were to be citizens. A delegation was promptly sent to Rome to present their demands; however, the Senate refused to grant a hearing. A bloody and desperate civil war soon followed. In Latin, it was called *Bellum Sociale*, which meant War of the Allies (Eng. "associates") but it has been translated rather too literally as the Social War.

The Romans now faced a formidable coalition of kindred peoples who had fought side by side with them in many past wars and were a match for them in training, structure and discipline. Ironically, the main challenge was to come from an area which had been the most difficult for Rome to subjugate centuries earlier; namely, the mountainous central region, whose inhabitants were the most tenacious fighters in the whole peninsula. The Italians were commanded by seasoned officers who had received their training under Gaius Marius during the war against the Germanic Cimbri and Teutones. In the face of this extreme danger, the Romans acted with characteristic vigor. Both consuls (Republican Rome's dual presidents) took the field with five legates (generals) each, among them the renowned Gaius Marius and Cornelius Sulla.

Nonetheless, the first year's campaigns began disastrously, with the Romans suffering defeats in central Italy at the hands of the Sabellians and Samnites. Unfortunately for the Italian confederacy, although it was very strong in fighting spirit, it was short on resources. By the end of the year, the Romans succeeded in stabilizing the military situation with victories in the north, in Campania and especially against the Marsi. The Italians' strength remained unbroken, however, and with rumblings of discontent among the loyal allies and a depleted treasury, the Romans decided that it would be wise to pursue a policy of compromise in order to check the spread of the rebellion and to divide their enemies. Towards the end of the year 90 B.C., the Roman Senate passed the Julian Law (*Lex Julia*), by which full citizenship was granted to the Etruscans, Umbrians and any other Italians who had remained loyal. Citizenship was then offered to all Italian communities which had participated in the war against Rome and agreed to lay down their arms. This was supplemented by the *Lex Plautia Papiria* which extended

Roman citizenship to all individual Italians who abandoned the revolt and presented themselves to a Roman praetor within sixty days. Finally, the *Lex Calpurnia* gave Roman magistrates in the field the power to confer citizenship upon all willing recipients.

It was this series of concessions, rather than military might, which turned the tide against the Italian allies. This sudden offer of full citizenship and the franchise granted the Italians their chief war aims. It proved to be an extremely successful policy which greatly diminished the vigor of the rebellion. In fact, by the end of 89 B.C., the Samnites and Lucanians stood alone in their continued hostility towards Rome. Brilliant campaigns by Sulla in Samnium succeeded in containing this threat and forcing the insurgents to assume an entirely defensive strategy. In the end, only the Samnites, under the leadership of the brave Pontius Telesinus (probably an ancestor of Pontius Pilate) fought on until their defeat in 88 B.C.

In the three years of bitter civil war, there were three hundred thousand casualties, and much of central Italy was devastated. Roman citizenship had been justly extended to the Italians at a terrible and unnecessary price. Rome had won the war, but Italy had won the peace.

"Italy had become a single body politic which at the end of the first century, was distinct from the rest of the world."

- Prof. Jean-Michel David (University of Strasbourg, France)

The nation-state of Italy was forged, which proved by its valor, patriotism and morale to be a force superior to any other state in the world. The natural result of this was the continued and dramatic expansion of the Roman Empire and the defeat of all its enemies over the next three centuries.

For the Italic people, in unity there was truly strength.



Giovanni Schiavo

Continued from page 17

trodden immigrant brethren, Giovanni remained active in his community as well. He was a Professor of Law and Social Science and a member of the Legal Consultancy Office of Baltimore's First Legislative District. He wrote for the *Baltimore Sun*, for *The New York Herald Tribune*, for the Italian-American periodicals *Domenica Illustrata*, and *Atlantica Magazine*. He was also the founder of the Vigo Publishing House (named after Francis Joseph Vigo, whose financial and military help make possible the conquest of the Northwest Territory during the Revolution). As a contributor to the *Encyclopedia Americana*, Schiavo included the roles of many Italians who participated in the building of America.

For instance, if it weren't for him, we would not know that Salvatore Catalano was made pilot of "Old Ironsides" — the U.S.S. Constitution during the war with the Barbary Pirates; that Marco Da Nizza founded Phoenix, Arizona; that Father Francesco Chino founded more than 30 churches and missions in California alone on behalf of the Spaniards; that Enrico Tonti explored Lake Erie, the Mississippi, and the Niagara region, establishing colonies in areas of Louisiana and Illinois on behalf of the French; that Filippo Mazzei was an active participant with Thomas Jefferson on behalf of the American Revolution; that William Paca (PAY-cah) was the only non-Anglo-Saxon to sign the Declaration of Independence; that Joseph Vigo (absent in the telling of the story of the Northwest Territory conquest) placed himself at the service of General George Rogers Clark in waging war against the British, wherein Vigo, by urging Clark to launch a mid-winter attack on Fort Vincennes and by keeping the Indians neutral, contributed to the American acquisition of Illinois, Ohio, Indiana,

Wisconsin, and Minnesota — the largest plot of land in the history of the world acquired through a single battle; that Captain Giovanni Malaspina laid plans for the excavation of the Panama Canal, and measured the height of Mount Saint Elias in Alaska, exploring the gigantic glaciers later named for him; that Giacomo Beltrami was among the first to explore the source of the Mississippi; that Samuel Mazzucchelli was the real Father Kelly, the one who founded the Order of the Dominican

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matter of reading
Schiavo.*

Sisters and designed Iowa's Capitol Building; that Eugenio — Eugene — Vetromile was among the first to study the languages of the Abenaki and the Penobscot Indians; that if it weren't for Luigi Palma di Cesnola, the Metropolitan Museum's first director, America would not have the vast collection of Cypriot antiquities, which achieved for it international status; that Rear Admiral Bancroft Gherardi saw service on many warships, including the *Pen-sacola* and the *Lancaster*, flagships of the North Pacific Squadron and of the European Station; and — oh, yes! of Maria Cabrini, who, in establishing dozens of churches and hospitals for the

poor, became the first saint of the United States.

Giovanni Schiavo's compendium is replete with names, activities, and stories needed to be better known not only by Italian Americans in particular but by other Americans as well.

As a historiographer, Giovanni Schiavo is to Italian-American history what Herodotus was to the early Greek world, what Tacitus was to the world of the early Romans, what Villani and Compagni were to the world of the merging Italian republics and city states. Schiavo might be considered the father of Italian-American history, having written the only comprehensive history of a people who have yet to appreciate the rich heritage of their forefathers.

Like Christopher Columbus, who died in almost complete oblivion despite his magnificent achievements, Giovanni Schiavo passed on in much the same way. In the few months before his death, Schiavo tried to place his research material with some midwest institution of higher learning to be used by future scholars. Luckily for the Italian-Americans, he placed his collections with Joseph Maselli, in New Orleans, Louisiana, where they are available for researchers. As of this date, however, very little attention has been given to that body of material.

Giovanni Schiavo's *Four Centuries of Italian-American History* should be in every library in America as well as in every Italian-American home. While other ethnic groups must recreate their past with imagination and bluster, we have achieved it with simple facts. Our pride and growth as a great people is only a matter of reading Schiavo.

To know where you are going you must know where you have been.

♦♦♦



The Italian Navy Today

by Gregory Carrubba



Aircraft Carrier, *Giuseppe Garibaldi*

The maritime traditions of Italy may date to the First Punic War (264 - 241 B.C.) when the Romans and their Italian allies first created a navy of multi-oared warships to destroy Carthaginian seapower and wrest Sicily and Sardinia from that African state. Their first naval victory was off Milazzo, Sicily, about 260 BC.

And, of course, the Venetian Empire was built upon seapower lasting from the Middle Ages through the Renaissance.

From its origins as the *Regia Marina* (Royal Italian Navy) in 1861, and with the exception of the years immediately following World War II, the Italian navy has consistently ranked among the Top Ten of the world's largest and best equipped forces. In size, it ranks slightly smaller than Britain's but larger than Germany's with 67 ships and 42,000 active men. Naval cadets are trained at the Naval Academy in Livorno (Leghorn), founded in 1881.

During the First World War, the Italian Navy pioneered the small offensive craft technology such as PT (Patrol-Torpedo) Boats and E (Explosive)-Boats. Newsreels of the time captured the sinking and capsizing, with all hands aboard, of the Austrian battleship *Viribus Unitis* by a daring Italian PT boat.

The Second World War was the *Regia Marina's* greatest challenge. Despite a deficit

of radar and fuel, and in spite of faulty German codes that were cracked by the British Ultra code-breakers, the Italian Navy successfully contested the Mediterranean Sea, supplying Italo-German forces in Africa for three years until the Americans came to Britain's aid.

After the creation of NATO in 1949, the severe post-war military limitations imposed on Italy by the United Nations were gradually relaxed, and the Italian Navy, in a state of ambiguity since the 1943 Armistice, was permitted to rebuild itself under a three-point mission statement. Its purposes, (1) to provide surveillance over its national territory, (2) to protect Italian interests abroad and to contribute to international security in times of crisis, and (3) to defend Italy and its allies against foreign aggression, have remained unaltered as it continues to restore its strength and prestige.

Under its NATO obligations of the post-war decades, the Italian navy's primary focus was to help keep the USSR's Mediterranean fleet in check. Though the Soviet threat dissolved in the early 1990's, the Italian navy continues to take the commanding role in NATO's NAVSOUTH arm, responsible for the protection of shipping, communications and all other Western interests in the Mediterranean and

Black seas.

Beyond a purely military scope, the Italian navy has readily participated in peacekeeping and humanitarian missions across the world. Notable relief operations have included assisting earthquake victims in Morocco (1960) and Belize (1968), as well as the dispatching of the cruisers *Vittorio Veneto* and *Andrea Doria* and the transport ship *Stromboli* to the South China Sea in 1979 to rescue Vietnamese refugees.

That same year, the Italian Navy responded to United Nations' peacekeeping efforts in the Middle East by assisting in the evacuation of civilians from Beirut and taking part in mine sweeping operations in the Gulf of Aqaba (the Red Sea).

Twenty ships of the 18th Italian Naval Group were sent to the Persian Gulf to safeguard commercial shipping upon eruption of the Iraq-Iran conflict in 1987-88, and two years later, the 20th Naval Group patrolled the Gulf to help enforce the United Nations-imposed trade embargo on Iraq. Italian frigates and minesweepers were also integrated into the multi-national forces of the subsequent Desert Shield and Desert Storm operations.

The 1992-95 peacekeeping efforts in Somalia, Italy's former African colony, developed into the Italian Navy's largest and longest overseas mission since the Second World War. This was soon followed up by extensive patrolling of the Adriatic during the Bosnia and Albania peacekeeping missions under NATO and the United Nations,



Cruiser, *Vittorio Veneto*



respectively.

Among the Italian Navy's special purpose sections is the 1,400-man *San Marco Battalion*. Created in 1917, this superbly-trained marine landing unit won universal attention and praise for its excellent performance as part of the multi-national peacekeeping force in Lebanon from 1982 to 1984.

Composing another group of elite specialists are the *Incursori Subacquei* ("underwater attackers"), expert frogmen with an extensive range of supplementary training in such varied areas as survival, weapons, hand-to-hand combat and even mountain climbing. With its primary wartime purposes of attacking ships at anchorage and performing sub-surface reconnaissance, this unit is the direct descendent of the famous Tenth Light Flotilla which wreaked so much havoc on Allied ships in the Mediterranean and Black Sea during World War II.

Although clearly capable of an offensive mission, Italy sees its navy in a humanitarian and peacekeeping role. As such, it projects the nation's global presence.

(Footnote: Ironically, it was fear of the Italian Navy that led the United States to embark upon its modern fleet-building in the early 1890's. At the time of the mass lynching of Italians in New Orleans by a mob (1891), Italy had a fleet of 22 modern steel ships, including dreadnoughts and cruisers. In the tense international aftermath of the lynching, some American newspapers and lobbyists fanned the fear of foreign navies to push the United States into a naval armaments race. At the time, the United States Navy had only one steel battleship. Had the United States not used Italy as a pretext, a modern navy might have been delayed for years and imperialist adventures like the Spanish-American War might never have taken place.)



Frigate, *Lupo*



Submarine, *Nazario Sauro*



Cadet Training Vessel,
Amerigo Vespucci

CARRIER/CRUISERS

Giuseppe Garibaldi
Vittorio Veneto

DESTROYERS

Luigi Durant de la Penne
Francesco Mimbelli
Ardito
Audace

TRANSPORTS

Stromboli
Vesuvio

GUNBOATS/MINE

LAYERS

Nibbio
Falcone
Astore
Grifone
Gheppio
Condor

PATROL SHIPS

Artigliere
Bersagliere
Aviere
Granatiere
Cassiopea
Spica
Libra
Vega

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S512 Nazario Sauro
S513 Enrico Dandolo
S519 Fecia di Cossato
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Storione
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Gaeta
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Sapri
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Word Games

Italian Words - Used and Misused

by Louis Cornaro



In Latin: CALCULATOR

The English language owes much to the Italic linguistic family. Latin alone contributed some 30% of English's vocabulary, from direct pass-throughs like *exit*, *calculator*, and *biceps* (there are about 330 such words) to complementary vocabulary such as *regal* and *reign* which flesh out the Germanic *king*.

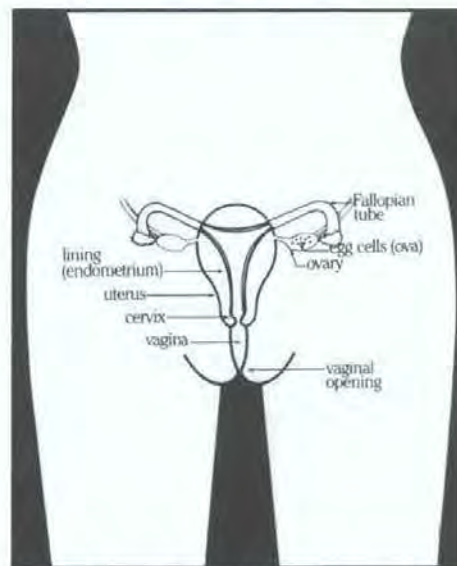
A recent article in *National Geographic* authored by T.R. Reid paid our ancestors the best compliment in this one sentence: "The enduring Roman influence is reflected pervasively in contemporary language, literature, legal codes, government, architecture, medicine, sports, arts, engineering, etc." Every word in that sentence is derived from Latin except the word "the".

The tragic death of Lady Diana last summer brought home another facet of the Italic contribution to our vocabulary - *paparazzi* - a word introduced to us through the movie *La Dolce Vita* (The Sweet Life). *Paparazzo* was a character in that movie, an annoying photographer who represented the worst in tabloid journalism. Indeed, there are numerous such words we take for granted that have been borrowed from Italian. Some have retained their original meaning and others have been misused to fill gaps in the English language.

The best applied Italian words can be found in the realm of music understandably because music, as we know it, is predominantly an Italic development. *Do re me*, *adagio*, *stanza*, *a capella*, *allegro*, *solo*, *piano*, *opera*, *tempo*, *aria*, *falsetto*, *arpeggio*, *primadonna*, *ballerina*, *staccato*, *cello*, *violin*, *trombone*, *tuba* are

Take, for example the word *mafia* which originally was an old Arabic word (*mu'afah* = protection) used to describe shakedown bandits in Sicily.

all Latin or Italian words which have retained their meanings.



Italian anatomists first identified many parts of the body. The fallopian tubes were named after Gabriele Fallopio, who also invented the first condom (cloth) around 1547.

In construction, words like *parapet*, *stucco*, *terracotta*, *terrazzo*, *cement*, *aqueduct*, *dome*, and *arch* pay homage to Italy's design and engineering skills over the centuries.

In the sciences the Italians have passed on their invaluable achievements with such words as *volts*, *galvanize*, *lava*, *volcano*, *zero* (derived from an Arabic word) *malaria* ("bad air"), *quarantine* (a 40-day isolation period), and *fallopian tubes* (from scientist Gabriele Fallopio). There are many more anatomical names derived from the Italian scientists who identified them but I will spare you the details.

Of course, the world of food most definitely has an Italian imprint. Italians have had the most fun in this area. Unlike, say, the Chinese, who identify food names with the grand scheme of the universe Harmonious Family, Dragon Shrimp, etc., Italians loved to nickname their favorite dishes metaphorically: *spaghetti* (little strings), *linguine* (little tongues), *vermicelli* (little worms), *pollo scarpariello* (shoemaker's chicken). Farm crops such as *broccoli* and *zucchini* were developed by Italians. And let's not forget that "baloney" is spelled *bologna* after its city of origin. Dining *al fresco* sipping a *martini* or

Italy's Global Role

by Rosario A. Iaconis

The Italians are coming!
The Italians are coming!

After more than 60 years of international obscurity, the Italians are finally flexing their diplomatic muscles and beginning to live up to the standards of their ancient forebears. Modern Italy's re-emergence as a major player in world affairs has been a long time coming. As the world's fifth most powerful industrial democracy, Italy is poised to assume its rightful place among the nations.

Italy will no longer
serve as an
American
appendage or
NATO's servile
junior partner.

Ironically, this new Italian resolve may have been sparked by the rantings of a madman.

Faced with the severe secessionist threat of Umberto Bossi and his upstart

Northern League (*Lega Nord*) in the fall of 1996, the normally fractious Italians rallied to the cause of unity in uncharacteristic fashion.

Luciano Violante, the President of the Chamber of Deputies, was unequivocal in stating that Italy would use any means possible, including force, if faced with outright secession. Gianfranco Fini, head of the right-wing *Alleanza Nazionale* (National Alliance), joined his leftist colleague in sternly rebuking Bossi. Speaking *ex cathedra*, and as a son of Piemonte and Calabria, the President of Italy, Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, underscored the indivisibility of the Italian Republic as written in Article Five of the Italian Constitution. Prime Minister Romano Prodi scorned any questions of national unity as unfit for discussion. Even Pope John Paul II inveighed against the sneering *leghisti* (i.e., League members) who seek to destroy Italy's ancient patrimony. Ironically, it was the *Pontifex Maximus*, a Pole, who delivered the most eloquent expression of the Italian people's common two-thousand-year culture.

Italy is a prosperous paradox. The average Italian earns more than the average Briton. Italy boasts the world's highest household savings rate and one of Europe's most impressive growth rates. Italians truly save for the prover-



Italian president Oscar Luigi Scalfaro is the first Italian head of state to journey to Ethiopia since the 1930's.

bial rainy day. Italy's official household savings rate averaged 17.3% in the last decade—more than triple the U.S. rate and well above Japan's 14.9% and Germany's 12.5%. As of the latest three months up to November 1997, Italy's GDP (Gross Domestic Product) rose 6.7%. That of the United States for the same period increased by 3.6%. Italian high school students routinely outperform their American counterparts in math and science. Yet Italian unemployment, particularly in the south, runs high. The national average for the second quarter of 1997 remains a stubborn 12.8%. Still, the Bank of Italy reports that the average family income in the *Mezzogiorno* (Italy's south) is \$19,500. England's average family income stands at \$18,700. Per capita GDP in the province of Brescia is

Continued on page 28



Italy's Global Role

Continued from page 27

\$33,000, far above the average in Switzerland, Germany or the U.S. What's more, Mayor Antonio Bassolino of Naples has outperformed New York City's Rudy Giuliani by restoring Naples to a gem of the Mediterranean. Crime has decreased by 25%, tourism has increased 40% and the streets sport sophisticated cafes and chic centers of fashion. Mostly gone are the servile signposts of the Spanish Bourbon occupation: laundry sprouting from balconies and chaotic street scenes. Naples' Teatro San Carlo is Italy's largest opera house. Further to the south, there are indications that new enterprises are being formed daily. According to New York Governor George Pataki, who journeyed to his maternal grandmother's ancestral home, the region of Calabria is "flourishing." As a result the Governor signed important trade and technology agreements with the region.

All across the board, Italy's vibrant economy is humming. Olivetti has shed its bulky mainframe identity and is diversifying into cellular telephones. Benetton and Versace lead the world of fashion in sales as well as style. Fiat and Pirelli are prospering after years in the red. And Parmalat is rapidly becoming "the Coca Cola of milk," conquering company after company in South America. Upstart Aprilia, a small motorcycle and scooter concern, has doubled sales and output between 1992 and 1994. In Calabria, the city of Gioia Tauro has emerged as the hub of sea container technology. It is rapidly becoming one of the Mediterranean's vibrant and modern crossroads of commerce.

Typical of the new Italian initiatives is Fiat's innovative Melfi plant, which is located approximately 500 kilometers east of Naples. This factory is known as the Advanced Technology Automobile

company (Sata). In addition to its state-of-the-art facilities and reliance on performance-related bonuses, Melfi's Sata worker outperforms the average European worker by turning out 79 cars per year as opposed to the continent's average of below 50. At Fiat's Melfi plant, efficiency is truly job #1.

The lira's 25% depreciation in 1994 made Italian goods more competitive in the global marketplace, creating a favorable balance of trade. In fact, Italy has a bigger trade surplus (\$37.5 billion) relative to GDP than Switzerland, Canada, France, Germany and Japan. For all their vaunted Anglo-Saxon ultracapitalism, the United States and Britain report record trade deficits. And Italy's bloated budget deficit, once a national embarrassment, has been more than halved by Prime Minister Prodi. Italy has now qualified for the opening round of the common European currency. Adroit political maneuvering and cuts in the overextended public sector by the Prodi government enabled the Italians to bring their deficit to well within the draconian Maastricht guidelines without resorting to the creative accounting techniques that were adopted by the Germans and the French. And, contrary to conventional wisdom, Italy is one of the world's low crime nations. According to the French Ministry of Interior, Eurostat and Interpol statistics (1994), there were 40 crimes per 1,000 population in Italy. Sweden, Britain, the Netherlands, Germany, France and Poland all reported greater numbers of crimes.

Per Capita Income South of Italy - United Kingdom



American newspapers like to call southern Italy "hard-scrabble." The figures don't quite bear that out. Free health-care and university education are also part of the "hard-scrabble" existence.

The Italians have come a long way since the humbling days of *Paisan*, *Open City* and *The Bicycle Thief*, when a prostrate Italy was reduced to a vassal state, partly dependent on Marshall Plan aid and immigrant care packages. In return, as a stalwart partner in the anti-Soviet alliance, Italy permitted an unfettered American military presence on its soil. Naples anchored the Sixth Fleet; U.S. airbases dotted the country; and Crotona (in Calabria) welcomed Uncle Sam's missiles when the Spanish said "Yankee go home."

Yet, the resilience of the Italian spirit eventually produced an economic miracle. The Kingdom of Italy became the Italian Republic in 1946 and the nation's corporations blazed new trails into the global markets. Italian diplomacy followed. However, at least ten American presidents continued to see Italy as a jumble of political parties without any international significance. Like most of its European allies, the

Continued on page 29

Italy's Global Role

Continued from page 28

United States held Italy in low esteem. Then came Lebanon in 1982.

The Israeli invasion of fragmented Lebanon led to a civil war that threatened thousands of innocent people in the Beirut area. The United States organized a humanitarian expedition utilizing military units from the U.S., France, Britain, and Italy. This was the first such operation the Italian armed forces participated in since the Second World War. Unfortunately, only the Italians seemed to remember that the mission was humanitarian and not offensive. Only the Italian forces managed to leave Beirut honorably, after having demonstrated their commitment to medical and economic assistance to the Lebanese and Palestinian people. The others evacuated in failure after Islamic suicide bombers destroyed their barracks in response to the Allied participation in questionable military operations. It was a numbing experience for we Americans, but one that showed

the world Italy's ability to carry out peacekeeping missions.

Italy's second opportunity in peacekeeping came in 1992 in Somalia. George Herbert Walker Bush had left Somalia for Bill Clinton to tidy up. And what had begun as a humanitarian mission degenerated into a desert debacle for the Americans. Ironically, U.S. generals openly scorned Italian commanders for daring to negotiate with Somalia's warlords. Though Somalia had long been an Italian colony, the Americans were filled with military hubris. After a number of humiliations and fatalities, the U.S. called off the mission.

For their wisdom and trouble, the Italians were frozen out of the Contact Group on the Balkans. President Clinton added insult to injury by advocating Security Council membership for Germany and Japan but not Italy.

Stung by Clinton's callousness, Rome seized the foreign policy opportunity afforded by the anarchy in Albania by organizing and leading a multi-Euro-

pean peacekeeping force under the U.N. to occupy Italy's former Balkan colony and restore order. This they did with great alacrity if little fanfare. In accomplishing their first solo military mission since World War II, the Italians sent a signal to Washington, London, Paris and Bonn. Italy will no longer serve as an American appendage or NATO's servile junior partner.

Italy steadfastly opposes the U.S. proposal granting permanent seats to Germany and Japan. As the fifth largest contributor to the United Nations and a peacekeeper *par excellence*, Italy cannot and will not be relegated to the dustbin of global politics. As Italian Foreign Minister Lamberto Dini said, "*It is not in line with the role of Italy in the world today.*" Nevertheless, the Italian response to the American cold shoulder is an attempt at compromise: a permanent seat on the Security Council for the European Union, into which Italy would rotate with the other European powers.

Still, such activities have not trans-

Continued on page 32

A Great People Cannot Thrive on a Shoestring.

We operate the Institute on a shoestring budget. But we think you will agree that few other organizations can match the scope or quality of our programs: video productions (Project Italia), youth education (Aurora), and of course, *The Italic Way*.

Surprisingly, we have never received a major donation, bequest, or endowment. Imagine the potential if just one benefactor provided the Institute with a significant gift! Tax deductible!

But, truly, any donation would help us in our much-needed work.

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Italian American Radio

Continued from page 11

ation Italian Americans. We announce in English and Italian and play both old and new music, Italian American music, opera — a little bit of everything.”

“I try to do that, too,” said La Barca. “I don’t aim at a particular age group. I have young kids listening to me and their great-grandparents. I try to play things that please everybody, although I don’t play a great deal of Italian hard rock.”

Similar views are held by Giuseppe Cicala, an architect from a Sicilian hamlet near Messina. He has been hosting *Italian Melody Hour* (3-4 p.m. Sundays on WFAX, 1220 AM, in Washington, DC) for 40 years.

“I do the show as bilingually as possible,” said Cicala, who sees his program as a catalyst for the DC Italian community. “I try to present people from both the official Italian world and the local Italian American community, and use whichever language they prefer during interviews. After the interview, I’ll sum up what they said in the other language for the monolingual listeners.”

“Since we are in the nation’s capital we get a lot of important visitors from Italy but we also have an active Italian-American community. They all have access to my microphone. We make the interviews brief — three to five minutes — and spot them in between a lot of good Italian music.”

Whether aimed at immigrants or later generations all Italian American radio programs have one thing in common — recorded music. It is the backbone of most, although even the most music-filled shows also include some news of the local Italian community, news from Italy, and interviews.

When I host *Festa Italiana* I try to mix it up, playing some old music by the likes of Carlo Buti, Claudio Villa or Sergio Bruni; a few selections from the ‘60s and ‘70s by stars such as Al Bano, Domenico Modugno and Gigliola Cinquetti, to the latest hits by, for instance, Jovanotti, Andrea Bocelli or Eros Ramazzotti. I also play some Italian-American numbers by artists such as Lou Monte, Connie Francis or Don Cornell, which are extremely popular with middle-aged listeners. Italian American music in which lyrics are partially in Italian, partially in English, unfortunately are a bit dated since the current crop of Italian American

recording artists shy away from such material. A pity. Wouldn’t you like to hear Madonna do *C’è la luna mezz’ o mare?*

On *Festa Italiana* I share announcing duties with Adamo, Patti (Ragona) Hehrer, Joe D’Ambrosio, Phyllis Cupparo and Liz Conti. A different pair of us host each week. Being of different ages, sexes and Italian American generations we reflect a full spectrum of tastes, and hopefully, reach a very diversified audience.

Italian American radio reaches out to the public and presents Italic culture in an enjoyable, painless way. It is a medium that has great potential for reaching the dormant members of our community while attracting people from other backgrounds.

Most Italian American radio programs come about through sheer force of will. Someone has an idea then he sells a radio station and a few sponsors on it. Occasionally, however, they come about through good fortune. Charlie Pisaturo’s show, *VIA* (The Voice of Italian Americans) on WALE in Providence, RI, (990 AM, 10 - 11 a.m. Sundays), is an example of the latter. The station owner wanted an Italian show. So he asked a friend to find someone. The friend recommended Pisaturo, a well known lawyer in the area. *VIA* has been on the air for three years.

If you have access to an Italian American radio program, support it. That means not only listening to it but telling others about the show, advertising on it if you have a business (or encouraging others to advertise on it if you don’t), patronizing the businesses that do advertise, and frequently calling and/or writing the station on which it airs to say something positive about “the Italian show.”

Also, get to know the people who work on such shows. Call up while they’re on the air to request a tune or make a dedication. Let them know you appreciate what they’re doing for the Italic community.

After all, working on an Italian American radio program is a labor of love. The main “pay” for those who do is audience enthusiasm.

The Italic Way was able to find out about the following Italian American radio programs. We know there are many more; please inform Managing Editor John Mancini (c/o *The Italic Way*, P.O. Box 818, Floral Park, NY 11001, or FAX 516-488-4889) if you know of any. We’ll list them in a future issue.

ALBANY (NY)

• Sunday (10 -11 a.m.), WABY, 1400 AM and 94.5 FM, *Ricordi Italiani*

BRIDGEPORT (CT)

• Sunday (9a.m. - 2 p.m.), WICC, 600 AM, *Italian House Party*

CHICAGO

• Sunday (9:30-11 a.m.), WEEF, 1430 AM, *Italia 2000*

• Sunday (2-3 p.m.), WEEF, 1430 AM, *Domenica Insieme*

• Sunday (1-2 p.m.), WEEF, 1430 AM, *L’Eco d’Italia*

• Sunday-Friday (4-5 p.m.), WEEF, 1430 AM, *Radio Fiore*

• Saturday (9:30-10 a.m.), WSBC, 1240 AM, *Mattinata Italiana*

• Saturday (11 a.m.-noon) and Sunday (12:30-2 p.m.), WJJG, 1530 AM, *The IBC Show*

• Monday-Friday (11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.), WEEF, 1430 AM, *Italian Melodies*

• Monday-Friday (1:30-2:30 p.m.) and Saturday (8:30-9:30 a.m.), WEEF, 1430 AM, *Italian Radio Theater*

• Monday-Friday (3-4 p.m.), WEEF, 1400 AM, *Folklore Italiano*

KENOSHA (WI)

• Sunday, (noon-2 p.m.), WRJN, 1400 AM, *La Voce d’Italia*

NEW YORK

• Sunday (10 a.m.-5 p.m.), 93.5 FM, *Programma Ciao*

• Sunday (noon-4 p.m.), WLIM 1580 AM, *Lilla Savona Show*

• Thursday (5-6:30 p.m.), WHPC, 90.5 FM, *Profumi d’Italia*

• Saturday (10 a.m.-12 noon), WHRU, 88.7 FM, *Souvenir D’Italia*

• Saturday (noon-2 p.m.), WHRU, 88.7 FM, *Ciao Italia*

• Monday-Friday (9-10 a.m.), WNYK, 105.9 FM, *Italian Super Network*

PITTSBURGH

• Sunday (11 a.m.-noon) and Monday-Wednesday (4-5 p.m.), WEDO, 810 AM, *Radio Italia*

PORTLAND (OR)

• Sunday (10-11 a.m.), KKEY, 1150 AM, *The Italian Hour*

PROVIDENCE, (RI)

• Sunday (10 - 11 a.m.), WALE 990 AM, *VIA The Voice of Italian Americans*

ROCHESTER (NY)

• Sunday (9 a.m.-noon), WWVG, 1460 AM, *Carosello Italiano*

SACRAMENTO

• Sunday (noon-1 p.m.), KJAY, 1430 AM, *Festa Italiana*

WASHINGTON, DC

• Sunday (3-4 p.m.), WFAX, 1220 AM, *Italian Melody Hour*





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Italy's Global Role

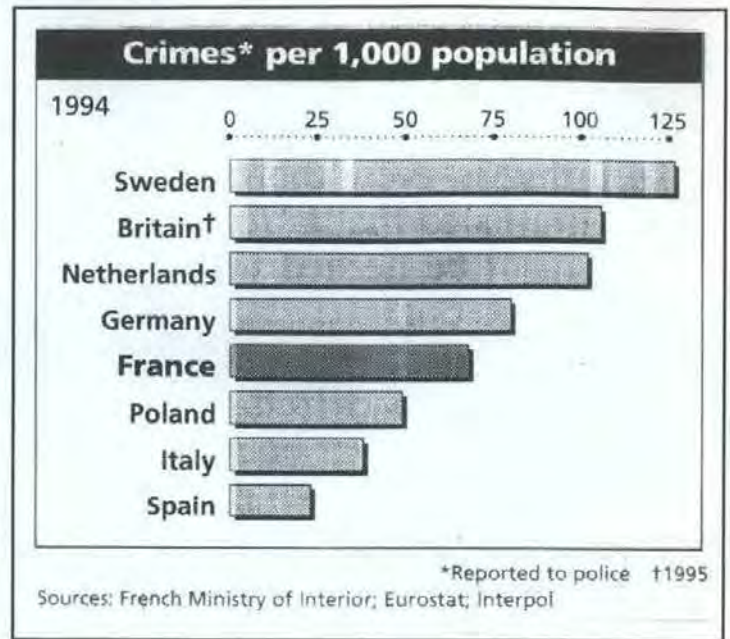
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lated into international acceptance. Each Italian advance has been followed by a setback. Although Italy boasts a lower inflation rate than Germany, a higher GNP than Britain and a lower unemployment level than France, the European Monetary Union had actively discouraged Italian participation in the opening round of the Euro currency. The Dutch and the Germans were Italy's most vocal opponents (Britain is not even in the mix). Despite such setbacks, the Italians persevered and won. Thanks to Romano Prodi's dogged commitment to the Euro, Italy's deficit was reduced to within 3% of its budget, bettering both Germany and France and falling within the harsh guidelines stipulated by the Italophobic martinets in the Bundesbank!

Italy's openness, allegiance to democratic values and respect for international law are viewed as signs of weakness rather than underlying strengths. As the *tangentopoli* ("Kickback City") trials demonstrated, political reform is serious business in Italy. How many countries would dismantle their entire political system, abolish tainted parties, and indict powerful establishment figures in the cause of justice? How many nations would lay their souls bare, warts and all, to achieve honesty in government? Not many. In this regard, Italy leads the world.

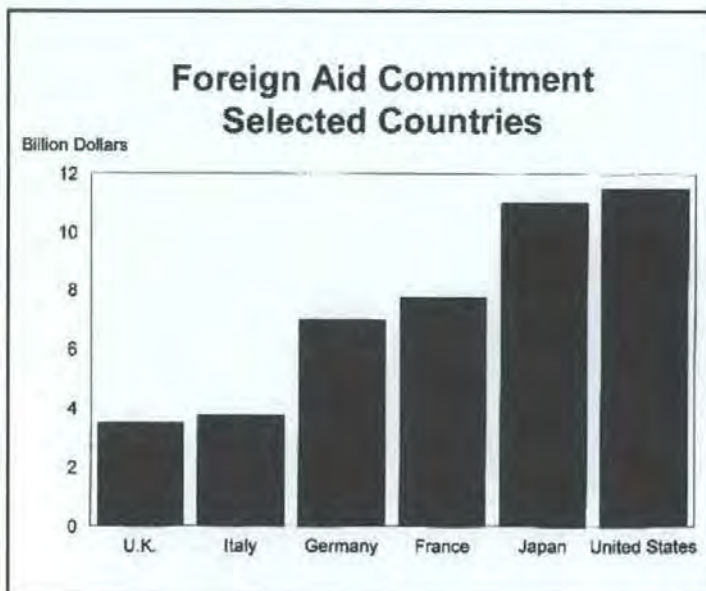
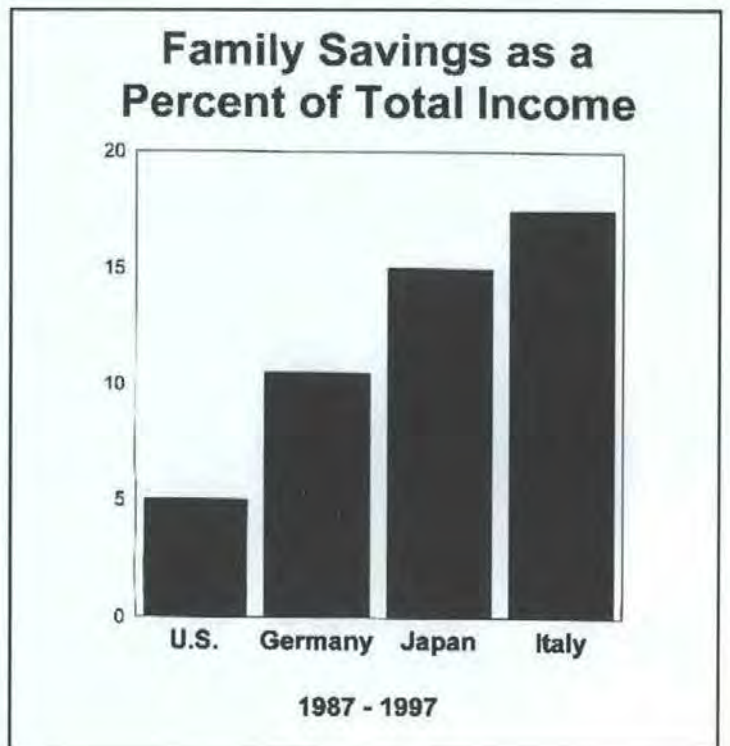
As a role model for democratic government, the Italian Republic has few equals. In its ability to confront corruption, in its voter participation, and in its standards of social responsibility it is probably our superior.

And now the Italians are ready to tread where no man has gone before. Daniel Golden, NASA's chief, has lauded Italian space technology and is counting on Italy to be a major con-



tributor to the international manned mission to Mars. The Italian space agency, *l'Agenzia spaziale italiana* (Asi) specializes in telecommunications, robot technology and the construction of astronauts' living modules.

Italophiles cannot help but be swept up by Italy's bold bid for world leadership in commerce, politics and science. It is only fitting that as we enter the new millennium, the "New Rome" be accorded its rightful place in the pantheon of nations.



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The Italic Studies Institute
P.O. Box 818
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Mrs. Margaret Mancini
94-42 241st Street
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