

# THE Italic Way

XXX 2000

The magazine of the Italic Studies Institute

DEEP ROOTS  
IN AMERICA *Our story  
before the  
20<sup>th</sup> Century*

*In this issue:*

RIGHT VS RIGHT: Comparing Conservatives

AFRICAN EXPLORERS, II: Brazza

MARCUS AURELIUS: Patriot/Philosopher

VENDETTA: HBO Movie Review

SPECIAL INTERESTS: Special People





# The Italic Way

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*Our cover photo, a Civil War reenactment featuring members of the 39<sup>th</sup> New York Infantry known as The Garibaldi Guard at Gettysburg in 1998, courtesy of John M. Cucuzza of Staten Island, NY.*

## Letters

### RATING THE ITALIC WAY

I am disappointed in not receiving *The Founders' Log* or *The Italic Way* magazine. How often are they published?

Viola Cirio, Phoenix, AZ

*(Ed. - We try to produce a Founders' Log every other month to keep members abreast of our activities. The magazine was originally a quarterly but due to staff and financial limitations it has become an annual. We are confident that our members are content with an intellectually stimulating periodical that is a cut above the rest, and therefore worth the wait.)*

How about an article on why our forebearers left Southern Italy?

Rafael Chase Ianziti, Sacramento, CA

*(Ed. - Good idea! We have agonized over that subject. We even gave it the working title of "What Italy Owes Italian Americans". Unfortunately, it may be too hard-hitting for most people. We'll mull it over again.)*

Enclosed you will find a contribution to help defray the costs of the ad in *Daily Variety*.

While I don't always agree with your views (too anti-British, I am an Anglophile) you are the only group that is saying anything. *Avanti!*

On another note, I recently attended the San Francisco conference of the American Italian Historical Association where they distributed the ISI message in *Variety* and it was quite well received.

Richard J. Vannucci, Castro Valley, CA

*(Ed. - Thank you for your support. Truth be told, the Brits don't respect Italians very much and their machinations over the last century make a tempting target for the seekers of truth.)*

In my opinion, *The Italic Way* magazine is the foremost publication on our Italo American heritage. Please keep up the great work.

Anthony Martignetti, Lake Hopatcong, NJ

About the latest issue of *The Italic Way*: the picture of Prince Emanuele Filiberto — He should get a haircut and shave.

Louis R. Pisaniello, Troy, NY



The listing of the Italian radio programs said that my program in Kenosha, WI, was on Sunday, noon - 2 p.m. This is not correct. It should be Sunday, noon - 3 p.m. I appreciate you putting my listing in the magazine. If I can do anything for the magazine (or organization), please let me know.

Luigi Aiello, "The Voice of Italy," Kenosha, WI

May I thank you for your invitation to join the Italic Studies Institute. I shall do my best to help promote your very worthwhile endeavors. With your invitation I also received the copy of your very informative magazine. Your article on radio was of the utmost interest to me.

Lea Serra, Yonkers, NY

### BOCCE ARTICLE FOLLOW-UP

Bocce is becoming one of the hottest ways to team-build in the team-charged atmosphere that rules Silicon Valley. This day, Bocce was team-building for 3Com. The next, Hewlett-Packard. The next, Sun Microsystems. The next, Apple. It's easy to learn and both competitive and social.

Evelyn Nieves, Los Gatos, CA

*(reprinted from The NYTimes, 9/1/99)*

*Continued on page 3*







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# Letters

## THE SOPRANOS

New York Times columnist Russell Baker said it in 1997: "[Mario Puzo's] stories violate the sensitivity principle by suggesting that organized crime is an Italian American affair. For years Italian Americans have fought this stereotype. . . Puzo escapes the insensitivity indictment under the rule that any member of a group. . . is permitted to be insensitive but only to his own group."

It is ironic that Mr. David Chase (aka De Cesare) who spent his professional life hiding and denying his cultural heritage is now using it as a personal shield to further the derogation of it. Italian Americans should not accept this insensitivity from the network, Mr. Chase, his cast of Italian American actors or the advertising sponsors of this HBO series.

Raymond LaRocca, Middleburg Heights, OH

*(Ed. - The sad fact is that "The Sopranos" has exposed the split among Italian Americans and the total powerlessness of their organizations. Political correctness is a sham when applied to Italian Americans.)*

## NOTHING IS SACRED

I am a practicing Catholic in full communion with the church. An incident . . . occurred at my local suburban Catholic parish, located in the Joliet Diocese [Chicago]. It involved a missionary priest of Italian descent who, in an attempt to be humorous, was derogatory to the Italian people. When it was homily time, he said, "As I told you previously, my name is Father Ted and my last name is long because it's Italian — Bertagni. But of course you could have figured out I was Italian because of the big, black limousine parked outside . . . the one with my godfather inside." There was a roar of laughter from the congregation of one thousand parishioners. Once before, at the conclusion of the Mass, this same priest said, "I'll be greeting all of you personally at the door of the church, but be careful not to trip over my machine gun on your way out."

About a thousand souls attend each Mass at my parish and they have seven Masses on a weekend. That's thousands of people who get a good laugh at the expense of "our" people. Multiply that by who knows how many parishes he solicits in a year and, using the same Italian bashing, he manages to reinforce the negative image of Italian Americans all around the United States.

We really don't need this, do we? And from an Italian man of the cloth . . . in the House of God. *Così' e' basta!*

Cav. Anthony Lascio

*(reprinted from Fra Noi, Nov. 1999)*

*(Ed. - This is certainly an example of media influence on otherwise intelligent people. Imagine what it is doing to mental midgets!)*

## A MAYOR WITH TASTE

Thinking they were on a roll, the producers and stars of HBO's "The Sopranos" figured they could buy Providence, Rhode Island, for the price of a donation to that city mayor's favorite charity. The idea was to use Providence to celebrate the new season of that Italic-bashing series. What they didn't count on was Mayor Vincent Cianci's good taste. He not only refused their offer but put the chill on the planned bash.

The Italic Studies Institute praised the Mayor for his act of defiance. Here is his response:



Members of the Institute,

I very much appreciate your letter of support in regard to my refusal to sponsor HBO's season kick-off celebration of *The Sopranos*. There is no getting away from the fact that the series, no matter how popular, typecasts Italian Americans in a damagingly negative manner. That the show focuses upon a miniscule number of Italian Americans for reasons of sensationalism reveals the degree to which the whole enterprise is purely profit-driven.

The city of Providence has a rich history of achievement by many immigrant groups, a dynamic that continues to this day with vibrant and growing Southeast Asian and Latino populations. Our history is replete with the outstanding contributions Italian Americans have made in numerous endeavors. In reply to *The Sopranos*' harsh dissonance, I'm one elected official singing a beautiful aria of praise of my Italian heritage and those who share it.

Again, many thanks for your support and your championship of Italian Americans and their inspiring legacy in our nation. I send my best wishes and regards.

Sincerely,

VINCENT A. CIANCI, JR.

Mayor of Providence

*[Ed.-Contrast Mayor Cianci's stand with that of New York City mayor Rudolf Giuliani, who invited the cast of "The Sopranos" to City Hall for accolades and photo ops. Maybe that is why they thought Providence would be a cake walk.]*

## THE INSTITUTE PRESSES THE ATTACK

*(Reprint of letter to Newsday March 17, 2000)*

At a time when both the cognoscenti and the common man are swooning over *The Sopranos* [Newsday columnist] Paul Vitello dares to expose this lurid program as nothing more than a forum for anti-Italian boilerplate of the most egregious kind. As a father of a Barnard undergraduate and an inquisitive third-grader, I share Vitello's revulsion to the cable show's incessant violence, misogyny and profanity. As an Italian-American, I find the linkage of these traits to my ethnicity to be abhorrent.

A reality check of Italian-Americans across Long Island reveals a cross-section of lawyers, physicians, psychologists and CPAs. They are the neighbors, friends and fellow professionals who enrich and ennoble our daily lives. Yet it is the made-for-TV mobsters — Tony, Carmela, Livia, and Big Pussy — who tarnish our popular culture by making Italo-phobia as palatable as it is profitable.

Rosario Iaconis, Director of *The Italic Way Magazine*.

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





# All'Italiana



## MISS ITALYS

There are two beauty contests each year to choose Miss Italy. One is *Miss Italy* the other is *Miss Italy in the World*. And why not? There are as many Italic people outside of Italy as there are in it (about 57 million). The newly reigning Miss Italy is **Manila Nazzaro** (left). The winner of the world title is **Ambra Gulla`** of Ethiopia (right). Miss Gulla` has roots in the 1930's colonization of that African nation. It demonstrates how widespread the Italic migrations have been.



## ROME RESTORED

Ancient Rome has always gotten the short end of the stick in the media and in academia. While the Roman Republic is portrayed as decadent, cruel, and despotic, the Greek city-states are mostly pictured as model democracies. Now comes a new book by Oxford University historian Fergus Millar which begins the restoration of Rome's good name. With the not-so-rousing title of *The Crowd in Rome in the Late Republic*, Millar suggests that the Romans improved on Athens' assembly by adding a senate of older and more stable citizens. More than that, Rome pioneered the tri-part government with courts, executive and legislature. Rome, not Athens, extended citizenship to conquered people. Italy, not Greece, brought women to their highest social positions in the ancient world. The Romans even developed the absentee ballot.

America's Founding Fathers knew the real story; we will just have to relearn it in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

## SMART LAUNDRY

The Italian appliance giant *Merloni Elettrodomestici* has just introduced the world's first internet-ready washing machine. The *Margherita 2000* uses wireless technology and a modem that allows the owner to call it, say, from work to start the machine or ask it what cycle it is in. The washer can also communicate with the manufacturer to warn of component failures and call for service. It will soon be able to communicate with other household appliances to coordinate electric and water usage strategies. Can inanimate coffee klatches be far behind?

The Merloni company is about the size of Whirlpool and ranks as Europe's third largest appliance maker after Electrolux and Bosch.

## ROGUE GAINS

The Italian government, under Foreign Minister Lamberto Dini, is determined to bring rogue nations back into favor with the Western powers. Italy has politely informed the United States that it intends to reestablish normal relations with Iran, Libya, and North Korea. Dini's philosophy is simple: keep all rogue states in touch to minimize distrust and surprises. According to Libya leader Muammar el-Qaddafi, "*Italy will become Italy's bridge to Africa, and Italy will become Libya's door to Europe.*" (Libya and Iran are major oil producers)

## THE LIFESPAN GENE

Italian scientists working in Milan and New York may have uncovered the genetic secret of longer life. Doctors Giuseppe Pelicci and Pier Paolo Pandolfi have increased the lifespan of laboratory mice up to 35% without any negative side effects. The Italians have identified and controlled the cell protein P-66 which normally ages cells. The process is being hailed by scientists around the world because this is the first success in mammals.

*Cent'anni* may be more than a toast soon.

## JUSTICE...IN PROGRESS

Since 1994 the Italic Studies Institute has been advocating that the United States Congress own up to the persecution of Italian American civilians during World War II. At that time ISI informed all the other major Italian American groups of its agenda but failed to rally their active support. In 1995, ISI, alone, initiated correspondence to Congress through then-Senator Alfonse D'Amato (R-NY). D'Amato, whose focus was on Jewish affairs for reelection purposes, did not fully embrace this issue. However, in 1997, House representatives Elliot Engel (D-NY), who is part Italian, and Rick Lazio (R-NY) took on the issue. (Credit goes to ISI member John Calvelli, an Engel staff member.) Finally, in November, 1999 the House passed Resolution 2442 calling for a full investigation of the wartime violations of Italian American civil rights. Senator Robert Torricelli has now introduced S.1909, the Senate version. If and when this bill is passed in the Senate and is signed by the President, this disgraceful episode will, at last, be recognized.



## MILESTONES

• **Mario Zacchini**, 87, the original human cannonball of circus fame. One of seven brothers who earned a living being shot out of a cannon at 90 mph, Zacchini followed his older brothers into the act in 1934 with the Ringling Brothers circus. According to Mario, the trick wasn't in being shot out but rather landing in the net. The act became so popular that by 1965 there were five different family members touring the United States in various shows.



• **Peter Pellegrino**, 82, was a founder of the Balloon Federation of America. His fascination for ballooning began in the 1920's with the sight of the great Zeppelins. In 1956, he was the technical advisor for the balloon sequences in *Around the World in 80 Days*. In the 1960's he led the way in promoting Ed Yost's new hot air ballooning as an inexpensive alternative to helium. In 1966, Pellegrino became the first American to pilot a balloon across the Alps.

• **Vince Vitollo**, 75, a pioneer of ultralight aircraft, was killed in a plane crash during a training flight. The former Army Air Corp flight instructor has been credited with training some 90% of New Jersey's ultralight aircraft pilots.

• Former justice **Robert C. Belloni**, 80, of the U.S. District Court was the first to uphold Indian fishing rights in the Pacific Northwest. His ruling in the landmark case *Sohappy v. Smith* was an historic precedent in recognition of dispossessed Native Americans. He ruled that the Indians were entitled to a fair share of the salmon harvest under treaties that were signed in the 1850's. Before Judge Belloni's decision, states had refused to recognize Indian claims.

• Burlesque Queen **Ann Corio**, 80-ish, was an American institution who carried the artform of stripping and burlesque into the 1980's despite being banned in Boston and New York for short times. Born one of twelve children to Neapolitan immigrants in Hartford, CT, Corio began her career at age 16.



• Golf great **Gene Sarazen** (Eugenio Saraceni), 97, died a legend in his own time and for many years to come. He was only one of four golfers to win all four of professional golf's major championships (The Masters, U.S. Open, British Open, and the PGA). He is famous for his miraculous double eagle in the 1935 Masters. And for good measure, he invented the sand wedge. For the dignity and sportsmanship he brought to the sport he will be forever known as "The Squire."



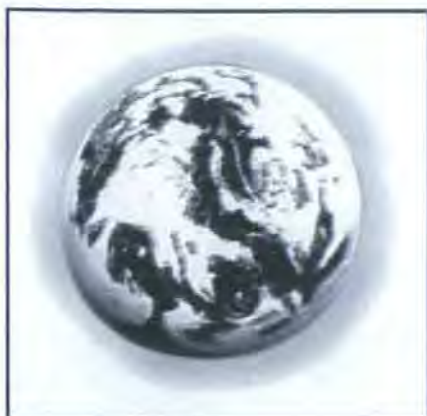
• "Irish" quarterback **Angelo Bertelli**, 78, was Notre Dame's star player during his college term 1940-1943. In 1943, he was the first of the school's seven Heisman Trophy winners and pioneered the now standard T-formation. His 1943 season was interrupted by the war when he enlisted in the Marines. Seeing action as a captain at Iwo Jima and Guam, Bertelli won a Bronze Star and Purple Heart.

• **Nunzio Palladino**, 83, the nuclear engineer that President Reagan called in to implement new industry safety measures after the Three Mile Island reactor accident of 1979. After serving as a captain in the Second World War, Palladino entered the atomic engineering field originally launched by physicist Enrico Fermi. After a number of managerial assignments at sensitive federal nuclear laboratories he headed the design team at Westinghouse that produced the world's first nuclear submarine, *Nautilus*, in 1954. In 1981 he became chairman of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

• Former Italian prime minister **Bettino (Benedetto) Craxi** died at age 65 in exile in Tunisia. Of Sicilian stock transplanted to Milan, Craxi, a Socialist, was one of post-war Italy's strongest and longest lasting prime ministers. He made his mark internationally when he out-stared the U.S. government after the Achille Lauro incident. When American jets forced down the escaping mastermind of the hijacked cruise ship on to Italian soil, Craxi ordered Italian troops to surround the American commandos. The Americans blinked. Some years later Craxi was convicted of corruption and fled to Tunisia.







# WORLD NOTES

## ITALY SINKS U.S.

This year's America's Cup sailboat race featured Italy's Luna Rossa against defending champs New Zealand. There were no Americans competing for the first time in 151 years. An Italian boat and crew financed by fashion magnet Patrizio Bertelli of Prada outsailed the American challenger AmericaOne in the best-of-nine sail-offs. At the Italian helm Neapolitan skipper Francesco De Angelis, whose cool demeanor and nautical instincts were more than a match for AmericaOne.

Prada's Bertelli shelled out \$55 million of his own money to float Luna Rossa. It wasn't enough to beat New Zealand, which shut-out Luna Rossa 5-0 and retained the cup.

## ITALIAN TROOPS ABROAD

Once again Italy has committed itself to international peace-keeping. The recent civil unrest in East Timor (Indonesia) has elicited a United Nations expedition. Already stretched with commitments in Bosnia and Kosovo, where it has thousands of men, Italy has sent a nominal force of 250 troops to the Pacific to support UN logistical operations.

Financially, Italy's contribution to the UN peacekeeping budget exceeds \$50 million per year. That is in addition to its regular contribution of nearly \$60 million per year. This year, Italy is the fifth largest contributor to the United Nation's budget after the USA, Japan, Germany and France. That's *una bella figura*.

## PURE JOY

Every generation or so, mayors across France vote for a young lady whose beauty embodies the French nation. Her likeness adorns statues, stamps, and coins. It was a tradition begun by the artists of the French Revolution, captured in the image of a bare bosomed beauty carrying the tricolor in the midst of battle. Among the past honorees were Catherine Deneuve and Brigitte Bardot. The goddess for this generation is model/actress Laetitia Casta, 21, of Italian descent born in Corsica. Her names are both Latin — Laetitia means joy, Casta means pure. And she is indeed a pure joy. Latin lives! And now it has a gorgeous face.



## GANDHI, CONTINUED

When last we left Sonia Gandhi, the Italian-born daughter-in-law of the late prime minister Indira Gandhi, she had been elected president of the Congress Party of India. In that capacity her goal was to convince voters on the subcontinent that she is Italian by accident and that her party should be restored to power. But alas, her opponents, the Nationalists, pressed home the attack on her ethnicity and managed to nix the Congress Party at the polls. On the bright side, Sonia succeeded in being elected in her own district and is now a member of the Indian parliament. Chalk up two wins for the accidental Italian. Were she to find herself in New York she could easily knock off Rudy and Hillary.

## PERFECT MANAGERS

It doesn't seem to be a coincidence that Italian-Americans make great sports managers. The immortal Vince Lombardi set the standard. In 1999, Yankee manager Joe Torre clinched his second World Series victory in a row. Paul Annacone has coached Greek American golden boy Pete Sampras to his sixth straight world title. And not many people know that the man behind the scenes of the women's World Cup Soccer victory was coach Tony DiCicco, 50, of Wethersfield, CT. Torre and Annacone might make the big bucks but DiCicco (pictured) gets to run around with 20 young ladies.



## GRAPE STRIDES

Few may know that the eastern tip of Long Island is fast becoming a major wine producing region. Climate and soil conditions make chardonnay, cabernet, and pinot that rival California and France. Although Italic vintners weren't the original pioneers of the North Fork they have arrived in numbers significant enough to get the attention of the *New York Times*. Recently, Italian prince Marco Borghese purchased the Hargrave Winery, the very first one established in 1973, for the princely sum of around \$4 million. The noble Roman Borghese family traces its roots to the 12th Century.

*The Times* noted that other Italic vintners on eastern Long Island include: Gristina, Macari, Pellegrini, Pugliese, and Petrocelli. Perhaps these Italic families will do for Long Island what other *paesani* did for California a century ago.

Borghese intends to introduce the Italian *nebbiolo* grape to make Barolo, Barbaresco and *sangiovese* wine in the future.







## EUROPE GOES ITALIAN

After the old guard leaders of the European Commission, (the executive body of the European Union), resigned in disgrace amid charges of corruption and mismanagement, the Euro Parliament elected an Italian to clean things up. Romano Prodi, former premier of Italy, is probably the most respected politician in Europe. Even most Italians laud him as a superb manager with a spotless reputation.

The Commission has a \$100 billion budget and is responsible for the smooth integration of Europe's evolving union.

Prodi's first political challenge presented itself in the Czech Republic. The mayor of one Czech city built a wall to ghettoize Gypsies. Despite the demands of the Czech president the mayor hung tough. Nevertheless, President Prodi warned, "Europe will never accept new walls separating European citizens from one another. We have had enough walls in the past." Bottom line: the wall came tumbling down.

## NATIVE TONGUES

French is not the only language of France anymore. With the coming of the European Union member countries are encouraged to allow regional and minority languages in official documents and news media. For France, which has stifled the Basques, the Celts of Brittany, the Germans of Alsace, and even the Italic people of *Corsica* and *Nice*, since the days of Napoleon III, everyone can *parlez* their own lingo. And that goes for French dialects like Provençal, that lilting Latin vulgate.

Another blow to the *lingua franca* is in Canada where it is reported that French is declining in Quebec due to new immigration from Asia. In fact, the influx from China is so great that Chinese will soon replace French as the second language of English-speaking Canada.

Here in the United States, French has slipped 3% in our universities but is still second to Spanish as a favored language. Italian, Chinese, and Portuguese are on the rise. German, Japanese, and Russian have declined.

## LATINS vs LATINOS

The ethnic term "Latin" has lately become strictly, and mistakenly, applied to only Hispanics. Of course, the original Latins hailed from the Italic peninsula and the term followed the Italian legionaries as they settled and intermarried throughout the Roman Empire. So it's a little disconcerting when the news media proclaims that "Italian Artists Conquer Latin Music Charts." Italian singer Laura Pausini (pictured) is one current example of the cross-over phenomenon. This genuine Latin artist sings Spanish so well that she fools most Hispanics.

Other real Latins like Eros Ramazzotti, Paolo Meneguzzi, Nek (a stage name) and Franco de Vita are part of a recurring trend that links the Latin homeland with its cousins in the Americas. And it works both ways. Hispanic artists often choose Italy, not the United States, as their path to global fame. Welcome home Latinos! Or should we say *latin*?



## ITALIANIZING JAPAN

Economists the world over have always been amazed at the staggering size of Italy's public debt. While most industrialized nations live comfortably with 50% to 60% debt (as a percentage of gross domestic product) Italy has been carrying around 120% without catastrophic effects for years. So maybe that's why otherwise austere Japan has hit the debt trail with 116% (1998). The main difference is that the Japanese are in an economic funk and do not wear that size debt as comfortably as the Italians.

The only saving grace is that, in both nations, the debt is overwhelmingly owed to its own citizens. No foreigners are banging at the door.

## ELIAN'S LIFESAVER

Amid all the hoopla about the 6-year-old Cuban lad, Elian Gonzalez, the man who actually dove into the ocean to save him has chosen to avoid the limelight. He is Florida roofer and avid fisherman Sam Ciancio.

Unlike his half-Italian cousin, Donato



Rescuers of Elian Gonzalez: Donato Dalrymple (Left) and Sam Ciancio. These two Italic cousins don't share the same views about Elian's future

Dalrymple, Sam is the quiet hero. Donato was along for the boat ride that fateful day and is credited with the assist. In the political aftermath the cousins proved to be completely opposite in their media involvement. While Donato pitched on camera for Elian's Miami relatives and ended up in the famous photo holding the terrified boy in his arms as federal lawmen burst into the Miami home, Sam wanted no part of the legal and political imbroglio. Today, the *cugini* are reportedly estranged, much like the Gonzalez clan.

## VOTE ITALIAN

It is now a law, after years of stalling, compromising, and dissecting, overseas Italian citizens will now have representatives in Italy's parliament. Unlike absentee ballots we Americans cast for our hometown candidates, overseas Italians will have unique at-large representatives. Though there will be only 69 seats to vote on out of a parliament of 500, this is the first time since the Roman Empire that Italians living outside the peninsula will have a voice in Rome. One survey estimates that there are about 193,000 Italian citizens residing in the United States, which includes voters with dual citizenship.





# EDITORIALS

## WHY SOME BIGOTRIES ARE MORE PALATABLE THAN OTHERS

Recently, John Rucker, the benighted Atlanta Braves fireballer, launched a bigoted diatribe against New York, blacks, Hispanics, Russians, Asians and Gays. His outburst was intemperate, crude and clearly the handiwork of someone for whom the acronym KKK has nothing to do with strikeouts.

Before the cock crowed thrice, the media responded with a vociferous denunciation of Rucker. Columnists and radio talk show hosts called for his ouster from baseball. All the major regional and national newspapers railed against Rucker's outlandish statements. The Commissioner of Baseball ordered him to undergo psychiatric tests a la the Soviet Union.

Imagine, however, what the reaction would have been had Rucker, instead, strolled through Brooklyn and waxed poetically about Tony Soprano look-a-likes packing the streets. Chances are many of the same radio, television and press pundits would be guffawing along with Rucker. And any protestations by Italian-American groups would have been immediately dismissed as much ado about Guido. For Italians, unlike other ethnicities, have a funny bone and can distinguish comedy from bigotry. They know when to laugh and how to cry. Didn't you know that, dear reader?

That's what *The New York Times* critic Caryn James must mean when she lauds *The Sopranos* as "a work of art that is tough, intelligent and daring enough to generate sympathy for a cold-blooded killer." Like most viewers she is not the least bit offended by the John Rucker-like anti-Italian stereotypes presented each week to millions on HBO. In fact, she gushes over the show because "it offers a chance to appreciate how nuanced the story of Tony Soprano and his families, nuclear and Mafia varieties, really is."

Perhaps, then, John Rucker did not engage in bigotry, after all. Perhaps he was merely offering us a gritty and nuanced depiction of New York's gorgeous mosaic in all its ethnic diversity.

- RAI

## SHIFTING EMPHASIS

We invite you to read and reflect upon this issues' FOCUS piece about our American Roots.

It has been drummed into our heads that Italians, like most non-Northern European late-comers, were "lucky" to be allowed to immigrate to these shores. Luck had nothing to do with it!

Not to remember and take pride in the 400 years prior to our grandfathers is to reduce our birthright in this nation from co-founders to imported laborers. Such a categorizing belies the great sacrifices our ancestors made to create this nation. It narrows the true dimensions of our participation and reinforces the myth of a pure Anglo-Saxon foundation of America. Clearly, the Italic contributions to the American nation since John Cabot are second to none.

Perhaps it is time for the overemphasized immigrant experience to be put in perspective.

- JLM

## WHO IS GIVING BACK?

We hear it sometimes from the hypocritical media stars who mop the floor with our Italian culture that they "give back" to the community. What they actually mean is they lend their name to non-ethnic charitable fundraisers. It allows them to be called "celebrities" and assuages any cultural guilt they may bear. But in the scheme of things, this charity work is but a pittance when compared to the social, economic and spiritual damage inflicted upon us by their willing participation in Big Media propaganda. Where is the "give back" from the millions, if not billions, of dollars that have been made in the prostitution of Italian American culture? We wrote to Anthony Puzo, son of the late author Mario Puzo, a short while ago. We asked him to let us know what contributions his father had made to our community in the way of scholarships, museums, cultural centers, social justice, anything. We received no answer. It is the same across the board. There is no Coppola Foundation for Italian Americans, no Scorsese Grants for Italian American Heritage, no De Niro summer camp for Italian American youth.

The plain truth is we have been had. So let us stop debating with one another over the first amendment rights of media corporations. Let's all ask our boys in the 'hood — where are the crumbs from the feast?

- JLM

## TURNING POINT?

Big Media's overkill in mob movies may be gaining us some sympathy in the press and among local legislators. Opinion pieces by *Italic Way* Director Rosario Iaconis have been published in the *New York Times*, *Chicago Sun Times* and *Long Island Newsday*. Our Chicago vice president, Bill Dal Cerro, has been featured in the *Los Angeles Times*, Chicago newspapers, and some national magazines. We are saying the same things we have always said but now thoughtful editors are recognizing that there is a problem in the media.

Our *Aurora Youth Program* is also getting more attention these days and funding is starting to come in from local legislators who are listening to parents and school officials (and *Aurora* Director Tony De Nonno) that *Aurora* is uplifting and educational. For the 5th and 6th graders of every ethnic and racial background, *Aurora* is a mini-charter school on Saturdays, but one that is free and open to all comers. *Aurora* had 14 classes in Metro New York counties this year and was featured in *Long Island Newsday* for the first time since the program began. This is progress.

- JLM





# Forum of the People

## Why the Mafia Matters

by Anthony (Tony) Giaboni

*Because of the tough  
image, even an average guy  
like me can deliver a careful  
warning to bad neighbors  
or deadbeat tenants.*

Let me say right off that I am not condoning criminals, Italian or otherwise. But the Mafia to most Italian Americans is not an "evil empire" or something to be ashamed of. Instead, it has been a source, whether we like it or not, of inspiration and a defender of our culture. Strange as that may sound, people have to understand the problems that Italians suffered for hundreds of years in Italy and here in America, from foreign invaders to Irish hooligans.

As everybody knows, Italy is a unified country in name only. Like someone once said, it's just a geographic expression. The country is made up of provinces and cities like Sicily, Naples, Milan, etc. and it may go through the motions of trying to be a unified country but the reality is that Italians are all fanatic individuals. It's probably the only country in Europe with so many dialects: Neapolitan, Sicilian, Barese, etc. And there's nothing wrong with that. Italians are the richer for it. In America, we should all preserve the ancestral dialects. Why should people get uptight if we say *pasta fazool* or *proshoot*. It's our personal heritage at work. It's what being Italian is all about - individuality. Let's face it, Italians don't pay taxes, don't obey stupid laws, and are smart enough to know that only family, food, and money are the priorities in life. They are rational enough to know that ideologies can get you killed and smart enough to understand the difference between sacrifice and suicide. But the two things that

really irk an Italian is to be ignored or disrespected. Which brings me to my point about the Mafia.

Italians have been the joke of Europe since Italy was unified in the 1800's. The Italian Army has been the biggest joke - they haven't won a war since Garibaldi - and their governments, from the strutting clown Mussolini, down to today's revolving prime ministers, get no respect from any world power. What does get respect and attention is the Mafia. Everyone who comes from a real Italian neighborhood knows that the wiseguys protect property and keep out the "undesirables". Granted, they are loan sharks and bookies but even those are services some people need occasionally. If they murder, they keep it among their own. I've never heard of any innocent people getting killed during a "rub-out." The wiseguys know it would be bad for business.

Movies about wiseguys are a lot more interesting than most film plots. When a movie shows wiseguys making sauce and speaking Italian it puts us right up there so all Americans can see our culture. You don't mess with the Mob, right? Because of the tough image, even an average guy like me can deliver a careful warning to bad neighbors or deadbeat tenants. Especially if they are not Italian, they assume you have the connections, right? What's the down side? And look at what the movies have done for Italian actors. Any flunky actor from the neighborhood can do the voice and get hired as a soldier or *capo*. Italian actors never had these opportunities before. They see no problem with image.

I have this theory that before World War II most Italian Americans were proud of Mussolini and the Blackshirts. They could kick ass in Ethiopia and in the streets of Italy. But when the war came and hundreds of thousands surrendered without a fight the shame

was too much for us. That's why Puzo and *The Godfather* replaced the old Blackshirt image. The mob guys always die fighting. There's no surrender when you hit the mattresses. They have the power, the money, the *goomadas*, even the politicians. Italians don't want to be wallflowers or wimps. They like to be at the top. So some American runs Microsoft. Who runs the rackets across the country? Maybe the Mob rakes in more than Microsoft without paying taxes. That makes Italians smarter, right? But the best part is that the real Mafia doesn't deal in drugs or hurt the country like the Columbians, Chinese, or Russian gangs. It is part of society, not destroying it.

To those people who constantly complain about Mafia movies and television shows I say, lighten up! Admit that there is a Mafia and that the average American knows the difference between a fictional character and the Italians they work with everyday. If thirty years of *Godfather* movies have hurt us, I don't see it. Italians live well and can do anything they want including running for President of the United States (if they don't have a skeleton in the closet, that is). When America gets tired of the Mafia we might have to look for new heroes. How about *Star Trek - The Mob*?

Italians are on a roll. The *Sopranos* is the biggest hit (pardon the pun) on television.

More Italian actors, writers and producers are working than ever before. Our politicians, from Mayor Giuliani, on down, love the show. And probably 99% of the Italians in this country live for Sunday nights. Is there a problem here? Duh!

*(Ed. - Tony Giaboni is a composite character developed by our staff to reflect the various points of view presented to us over the years. If he makes sense to you chances are you are not a member of the Italic Studies Institute.)*







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# A Review

## HBO's MISPLACED PRIORITIES

by Bill Dal Cerro

It remains the worst mass lynching in U.S. history: In 1891, 11 Italians found not guilty in the murder of a popular New Orleans police superintendent were dragged from their cells by an angry mob—some 10,000 strong—and brutally shot and hanged. The incident became a national nightmare, bringing Italy and America to the brink of war—a tense and volatile situation comparable to the Cuban missile crisis some 70 years later.

Written about by Professor Richard Gambino in his 1977 book *Vendetta*, the story has finally been dramatized in an HBO movie of the same title, featuring an all-star cast (Christopher Walken, Bruce Davison and Joaquin de Almeida), a commendable director (Nicholas Meyer, of *The Seven Percent Solution* fame) and better-than-average production values. *Vendetta* first ran in late July, 1999, generating a little outrage of its own, to wit: Who knew about it?

As he noted in his favorable review of *Vendetta*, *Los Angeles Times* television critic Howard Rosenberg writes that the film “was curiously de-emphasized by usually promotion-minded HBO.” This is the same network, of course, whose blatant—and eventually successful—ad campaign for Emmy nominations for its anti-Italian show *The Sopranos* raised eyebrows even among seasoned industry viewers.

The protagonist of *Vendetta* is one of the accused: 15-year-old Gaspare Marchesi (the open-faced Alessandro Colla), a recent immigrant to the port of New Orleans who, along with other males in his family, including his father, works the productive fruit and vegetable docks of the area—run by wealthy Italian-American Joseph Machecha. (Machecha is played by Portuguese actor Joaquin de Almeida, who is making a career out of playing proud Italians: he was the suave Roman “guide” in the 1994 film *Only You*).

Machecha's dominance and the success of the port area, a linchpin of the New Orleans economy, is seen as a threat to the Anglo-Irish who make up the state's power struc-

ture. Among them are business man James Houston (Walken) and the ambitious Mayor Joseph Shakspeare. The latter, in fact, was often as eloquent as his namesake, though not for nobler purposes, once describing the local Italians as “filthy in their person...without courage, honor, pride, religion or any quality that goes to make a good citizen.” Ironically, it was local plantation bosses who actively recruited Sicilians to work the docks, eager to capitalize on the new immigrants' unstinting work ethic—which, of course, is what propelled the port of New Orleans into a shipping power. Indeed, the city's so-called “French Market,” built in 1813, became such a cornucopia of Italian sights, smells and businesses by 1890 that it was dubbed “Piccolo Palermo” (Little Palermo).

To his credit, director Meyer (who also scripted the film) doesn't whitewash the immigrants. The Sicilians are shown as a productive and tightly-knit community, a people who, despite their humble origins, put their trust in their Anglo-Irish and Italian “bosses” and treated fellow African-American field hands as equals (the latter of which also posed a threat to the New Orleans elite, who were accustomed to treating blacks—indeed, all new immigrants—as inferiors). Yet the Sicilians also brought with them a competitive, clannish mentality, eventually splitting themselves into two separate “families” that worked the docks: the Provenzanos and the Matrangas. Machecha was the boss, but, as the film shows, the constant jockeying for power among the proud clans proved an asset for the white bosses and their “divide and conquer” strategy.

One foggy evening, Police Superintendent Hennessy, who had had run-ins with both factions, was shot down in the street on his way home by unknown assailants. A patrolman, Bill O'Connor, ran to Hennessy's

*“Vendetta...was curiously de-emphasized by usually promotion-minded HBO.”*

—Howard Rosenberg  
*L.A. Times*

Richard Gambino

## Vendetta

The True Story of the Largest Lynching in U.S. History



aid, but to no avail. He did, however, ask the prostrate Hennessy who committed the crime. Hennessy allegedly replied, “the Dagoes”. Though the film keeps this ambiguous—an unobjectionable point, since Hennessy, who lingered for days afterward before dying, it never elaborated on this reply, which was reported by only one witness: O'Connor.

After the murder, the city of New Orleans was whipped into a frenzy of hatred, with local law officials marching through Italian neighborhoods rounding up as many of the “garlic eaters” they could find. (Note: Unlike *The Sopranos*, which uses anti-Italian epithets for giggles, the racial terms in *Vendetta* have only one purpose: to reveal the racist attitudes directed toward the immigrants.)

Nineteen suspects were rounded up, with 14 of them eventually being indicted to stand trial: Machecha, Charles Matranga, Gaspare Marchesi and his father Antonio, Pietro Monasterio, Antonio Scaffidi, Emanuele Polizzi (a schizophrenic whose odd behavior confirmed popular prejudice about “crazy” Italians), Antonio Bagnetto, Bastian Incardona, James Caruso, Rocco Geraci, Frank Romero, Loretto Comitz (sic), Charles Traina, Peter Natali, Charles Pietza, Charles Patorno, Salvatore Sincerì and John Caruso.

Thanks in part to the dogged competence

*Continued on page 32*





# Focus Deep Roots in America

## ITALIANS IN AMERICA PRIOR TO THE MASS MIGRATIONS

by John Mancini

Certainly, the perception of most Americans is that this continent and this nation were colonized primarily by the English, the Spanish, and the French. In absolute terms, this is correct. But we also know that sub-Saharan Africans, Dutch, Germans, and Scotch-Irish (Protestants) came here in great numbers before the American Revolution. But why were Italians conspicuously absent in the rollcall of colonists, especially in light of the fact that "the discovery of America was, in part, an Italian enterprise," according to Hispanic historian German Arciniegas (*Amerigo and the New World*, p 131, Knopf, 1955.) After all, throughout Europe during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries Italians had well-established business



His Excellency Miguel La Grua, Marquis of Branciforte (Sicily), founder of Santa Cruz, CA, Viceroy of New Spain 1794 - 1798.

colonies in England, Spain, Portugal, and France, and religious enclaves of Protestant Italians in Holland (actor Henry Fonda's ancestors among them). In addition, the Spanish occupation of

southern Italy during those centuries and the strong Catholic bonds between the two Latin nations linked the two peoples in every endeavor.

Having made these observations, the clear deduction would be that Italians had to be present in significant numbers during the colonization of North America, and South America for that matter. Sure enough, there is ample evidence to support this conclusion.

Italian American researcher, Giovanni Schiavo (1898-1956), spent the better part

of his life in search of our American roots. It must have profoundly disturbed him, as an immigrant himself from Sicily, to be lumped together with the "huddled masses" made famous by Emma Lazarus

and engraved on the Statue of Liberty. To be tolerated as bedraggled strangers by earlier "Americans" to a country which was discovered by Cristoforo Colombo, Giovanni Caboto, and Giovanni da Verrazzano and named for Amerigo Vespucci probably did not sit well with someone of Schiavo's intellect. Schiavo felt compelled to uncover the true history of his people after Columbus and before the start of the mass migrations of 1890- 1920. In that mission he succeeded magnificently. His countless hours of research produced the landmark work, *Four Centuries of Italian-American History*.

Having spent 25 years in researching his first book, Schiavo came to several conclusions. One, that not all of the early Italians had Italian names. And two, for every distinguished Italian he uncovered, he reasoned, that there must be a good number of undistinguished Italians from which they sprang. His point was that the Italian population before the mass migrations was significant enough to produce an impressive array of distinguished sons. So, if the Jamestown settlement in 1622 listed 16 Italian glassblowers, their descendants, relative to 17<sup>th</sup> Century actuarial stats, might well have numbered over 2,000 by the year 1797. Those progeny, now of mixed ethnicity, would be further assimilated with anglicized surnames. Witness the case of the Tagliafferro clan. Originally settled in Virginia in 1655, the name evolved through spelling corruptions into Tolliver.



His Excellency Antonio Maria De Bucareli, Viceroy of New Spain around the time of the American Revolution.

Schiavo came across a list of Italians residing in England during the 1600's with names already anglicized such as Lambert Garrett, Arnold Giles, Godfrey Sokes, and Peter Fox. He knew they were Italian because they were labeled so on the English record. Clearly, someone had taken liberties with their Italian names, perhaps translating them from, say, Volpe to Fox or giving them a crude English pronunciation. The net effect, of course, was to confuse the historical record. Still, enough notables survived the gauntlet of assimilation to reveal a strong Italic presence.

The European competition to inhabit strategic areas of the Americas entailed dealing with the Indians and fending off competitors. Moreover, the Cross followed the Sword and Catholic missionaries were in demand to convert the natives. Consequently, Italy's contribution to the colonization and early development of North America was limited to the skilled and the educated rather than boatloads of land-seeking immigrants. Italian craftsmen were tapped to produce trade goods such as glass beads for the natives. Italian engineers were recruited to design fortifications. And Italian missionaries joined the quest for new souls. Later generations of Italians took part in the formation of the United States as soldiers, financiers, and statesmen.

## Building Spain's Empire

Spain's entry in the New World is easily traceable to Columbus. Becoming Spain's first governor in the Americas, Columbus headed a long line of Italian participants in the founding of Spanish America. In 1509, his son Diego was named gov-



Admiral of the Spanish Navy Alessandro Malaspina, explorer of the Pacific coast of North America.





*To be tolerated as bedraggled strangers by earlier "Americans" to a country which was discovered by Cristoforo Colombo, Giovanni Caboto, and Giovanni da Verrazzano and named for Amerigo Vespucci probably did not sit well with someone of Schiavo's intellect.*

ernor and then viceroy of Hispaniola. Diego served until 1523 and was acclaimed for setting free 150 indians from South Carolina who were kidnapped by Spanish slavers.

On the continent itself, Spanish records indicate that Italians participated in the conquest of Mexico City with Cortes (Juan Siciliano), explored Arizona, with Coronado (Francisco Rojo [Rosso?]), and reached the



**Enrico Tonti, French explorer and governor of the Louisiana territory.**

Pacific Ocean with Balboa (Francisco de Messina). These men had some rank for they are described as having "arms and horses." Juan Pablo of Brescia established the first printing press in the New World and Alessandro Geraldini became the first Catholic bishop in the Americas. Another missionary, Friar Marco Nizza, was the first to enter Arizona in 1539 and it may have been one of his visions of a mirage in the desert that spurred the conquistador Coronado to mount his expedition into the American southwest, accompanied by Fr. Nizza in search of the legendary El Dorado.

That other Spanish explorer, Hernando De Soto nearly lost his title as discoverer of the Mississippi River when his three-year expedition from Florida got stuck at the

banks of the famous river. De Soto died there in 1542 and his expeditionary force was saved by the skills of Italian shipbuilders who constructed the boats that carried the adventurers back to Mexico. A survivor of the expedition later wrote of the Italian engineer Francisco, "... a man from Genoa whom it was God's will to preserve (for without him they could not have left that land)."

To defend their holdings in America against pirates and the French, Spain utilized Italian engineers to build strategic forts. In 1589, Battista Antonelli

began construction on Morro Castle in Cuba. (By the way, his uncle Giovanni had proposed to the Spanish the cutting of a canal through Nicaragua back in 1529.) Italian military engineers oversaw the erection of forts in Florida, Puerto Rico, and California. Miguel Costanso fortified San Diego and Monterey in 1769.

The Spanish were big on converting the Indians and in this holy venture Italians played a significant role. While Friar Nizza plied his trade in the desert, Father Eusebio Chino, or Kino to the Spanish, worked his magic along the west coast of Mexico and southern Arizona building more than 30 missions and chapels between the years 1681 and 1711, the year he died. Spread across the lower Southwest, his missions, besides producing converts, also produced foodstuff and livestock. In those days, a mission was not just a building but a self-contained plantation with herds of cattle, sheep, and goats; acres of crops and fruit trees, settlements of houses and workshops. Father Chino was also a part-time scientist who studied and wrote about astronomy.

It was only a matter of time that Italians reached leadership roles in New Spain. One of the most successful of Viceroys ruling from Mexico was a Florentine named Antonio Maria de Bucareli. He died in 1779. Another man of influence was the Sicilian Miguel La Grua de Branciforte, a

general of Spain and founder of Santa Cruz, California. He was Viceroy of New Spain from 1794 to 1798. At sea, Spain had Brigadier (Admiral) Alessandro Malaspina, who undertook a voyage around the world in 1786-88 and beginning in 1789 surveyed New Spain's entire Pacific coast all the way up to Alaska, cataloging coastal depths, geography, geology, botany, and inhabitants.

## Developing New France

While Italian links to Spain were heavily rooted in Catholicism and the Spanish occupation of southern Italy, those with France evolved from France's fascination with the high culture of northern Italy. Since the days of Catherine De Medici whose marriage to a French king brought the arts, sciences and even cuisine to the rough-edged French, there was a steady influx of Italian brainpower into France and subsequently into the New World. Explorer Giovanni da Verrazzano, the first to enter and describe New York Harbor in 1527, was the starting point of Franco-Italian efforts.

Like the Spanish, the Catholic French saw America as a vast reservoir of souls awaiting the word of Christ. In 1642, Father Francesco Giuseppe Bressani labored among the Algonquin Indians of Canada. Two years later he was transferred to upper New York (territory not yet in English hands) to preach to the Hurons when he was captured by the Iroquois. Enduring torture and slavery he was eventually sold to Dutch sailors at Fort Orange (Albany). Father Bressani published

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**The annexation of the Northwest Territory was partly credited to trader Francis Vigo.**



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## Deep Roots in America

Continued from page 13

his harrowing adventures in 1653 in Rome. The book was also the first description of Niagara Falls to hit the Continent.

The most prodigious of Italian explorers in the service of France had to be Enrico Tonti, who was second in command under Robert La Salle. Born in Gaeta, just south of Rome, the Tonti family had close ties with Cardinal Mazarin, prime minister of France and fellow Italian (born Giuseppe Mazarini). It was through this connection that Tonti was assigned to La Salle's expedition.

Despite a handicap (he lost a hand during a French incursion into Spanish-occupied Sicily, giving him the name of Iron Hand), Tonti was no drag on La Salle's expedition. It was Tonti who had built the first ship to sail the Great Lakes, the *Griffon*. Tonti was beside La Salle when they traversed the Mississippi River reaching the Gulf of Mexico in 1682. The Italian's was the second name, after La Salle, on the document that took possession of the Louisiana Territory for France. It was Tonti who co-founded New Orleans.

Tonti's ability to command far exceeded La Salle's, for within five years of exploring the New World, La Salle was assassinated by his own Frenchmen leaving Tonti to rule over the vast Louisiana Territory for the next 20 years. In that time, he had achieved peace among the Indians by creating a confederation of tribes numbering 20,000 warriors and setting them up in commercial ventures with French trading companies. The State of Arkansas still considers Tonti one of its founding fathers. From the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico Tonti opened the interior of America's heartland before the Anglo-Saxons came. And if you consider that the Louisiana Territory was later sold to the United States by the Italian Napoleon Bonaparte, Emperor of France in 1803, then

our Italian connections are all the more amazing.

Enrico Tonti also had relatives who joined in the explorations of America's interior. Alphonse Tonti, his younger brother, co-founded Detroit with Antoine Cadillac. He governed Fort Detroit for eleven years and his wife gave birth to the first caucasian child, Theresa, in that city. Tonti had many cousins, members of the De Lieto clan (Desliettes in French). Pierre Desliettes was one of the first white settlers of the "village" of Chicago from 1698 to 1702. Another De Lieto was the commander of Fort Chartres near St. Louis from 1726 to 1730. Yet another, Joseph Desliettes, was second in command at Green Bay, Wisconsin. Finally, and this is difficult to prove, one Daniel Du Lhut may have been a cousin (a corruption of De Lieto?). The city of Duluth, Minnesota was named for him.

Down in New Orleans there is convincing evidence that large numbers of Italian immigrants followed in Tonti's wake. Records indicate a plan to settle 400 Italian families there in 1720 and by 1814 a British military appeal to the people of New Orleans during the War of 1812 addresses, "Spaniards, Frenchmen, Italians, and Britons." Even the famous Confederate general P. T. Beauregard had Italian blood through his mother.

### British America

England's claim to North America was based on Giovanni Caboto's voyage in search of the elusive Northwest Passage. In 1497, Caboto's ship the *Mathew* arrived at, we believe, Newfoundland where the navigator planted the flags of England and his adopted homeland, Venice. (He was originally from Gaeta, the same city that produced explorer Enrico Tonti some years later.) In any event, from that date forward thousands of Italians would work to develop the continent on behalf of the British crown, and later, English-

speaking America. The problem for us is identifying them through the vagaries of time and confusion of language. Still, as you will see, enough of the record survives to demonstrate the strong participation of the

Italic people in creating the United States before the mass migrations of their cousins in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries.

The first viable colony planted by the English was in Virginia under the auspices of the Virginia Company (named for the "Virgin Queen," Elizabeth I). Fittingly for capitalist America, this plantation was funded by stock holders. Among its shareholders were Sir Julius Caesar and the brothers Edward and Toby Palavicine. Caesar was the son of a Cesare Adelmare and the Palavicines sprang from Sir Horatio Pallavicino, a member of the House of Lords. Sir Julius also sat in the House and, among other titles was Chancellor of the Exchequer (Treasury). Other investors were the Lupo family who settled in the colony and produced offspring. By 1622, a dozen or so Italian glassblowers were encouraged to settle at the colony.

So why were Italians so involved in England's society in the first place? Remember, the English were a fairly crude race when Italy was launching the Renaissance. Learned Italians were encouraged to visit and settle in England as teachers, musicians, clergy, merchants, artists and scholars. They became a permanent part of the fabric of ole England. Toby Palavicine even married Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell's daughter in 1606. Moreover, thousands of Italian Protestants fled their homeland and settled in Protestant Holland and England. Consequently, these immigrant families assimilated and later re-immigrated to the New World as Englishmen.

There is little evidence of Italians among the homogenous Pilgrims of the Massachusetts colony, but among the Dutch of New Amsterdam the name Cesare Alberti appears



Colonel Luigi Tinelli of the 90<sup>th</sup> New York Infantry (Civil War)



Francis Vigo, Louisiana trader who helped defeat the British in the Northern Territory in 1779



General Francis Spinola, who raised and led 4 Union regiments during the Civil War







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## *Right vs. Right* by Rosario A. Iaconis

### Italy and the United States see Conservatism differently

Europeans categorize their politics by left, right, center and everything in between. The current Italian government is called "center left" because it is a coalition of center and left wing parties. Here in America we disdain the labels left and right, preferring the terms liberal and conservative. Democrats are considered more liberal than Republicans, but sometimes a "conservative" Democrat like President Clinton appears. Still, our definition of liberal is "big government," aka socialism, and that of conservative is "free market" aka rugged individualism.

Though it may come as a surprise to Italian Americans who pride themselves on family values, patriotism and the gospel according to Rush Limbaugh, conservatives (the Right) in Italy are a breed apart. While they remain proud of their *Risorgimento* roots

and wave the *tricolore* with brio, Italians of the right differ markedly from their counterparts in the Anglo-Saxon democracies. A Ronald Reagan or Margaret Thatcher platform would not arouse much passion in Rome, Milan or even Palermo. Italy, like Europe has a tradition of socialism that would appall American conservatives.

Though they speak of federalism and devolving more power to the regions, Italy's right-wingers do not adhere to the concept of states rights. If they did, Garibaldi, Cavour and Mazzini would be spinning in their graves. What's more, Italians of the Right, or *la destra*, are not blindly supportive of an unfettered free market. They accept the need for national health care, workers rights, European unity (with national identity), and free education. They differ from the Left in their support of a traditional society, entrepreneurship, assertive foreign policy, and nationalism.

Of all the priorities of the Right, the restoration of Italy's international standing is among the highest. And that is why *Forza Italia* ("strength to Italy!") was chosen by former business tycoon—and ex-cruise ship crooner—Silvio Berlusconi as the name for Italy's leading conservative party. Cleverly capitalizing on the national passion for soccer, it acts as a unifying rallying cry for all Italians. And, unlike their American and British kin, Italian conservatives attract a wide spectrum of philosophies. Initially, Berlusconi was wildly successful in cobbling together a group of disaffected former Christian Democrats, Socialists, Republicans and



Current Prime Minister Giuliano Amato (Socialist, "Left")

Gianfranco Fini's pivotal *alleanza nazionale* (National Alliance). Fini's post-Fascist party includes, among others, the niece of Sophia Loren and granddaughter of *il Duce*, Alessandra Mussolini.

Although *The Wall Street Journal* raved about this Italian turn to the right, believing it to be a carbon copy of the Reagan Revolution, former Secretary of State James Baker called a press conference to denounce what he perceived as Italy's flirtation with an old flame—Fascism. Once again, the American conservatives got it wrong. *Forza Italia* is not about worshipping at the altar of Adam Smith. Though led by an arch-capitalist who speaks the language of globalization and admires America's financial and electronic acumen, Berlusconi is smart enough to know that the Italians, like their Latin cousins, the

*Continued on page 17*



President of the Italian Republic Carlo Azeglio Ciampi ("Center Right")





French, eschew the excesses of Anglo-Saxon hypercapitalism. Even Germany's Gerhard Schroder has said as much. Like Japan's leaders—of nearly every political stripe—Italian conservatives do not want to dismantle the welfare state but retool it. (Let's not forget that IRI, *l'istituto per la ricostruzione italiana*, helped to create Italy's postwar prosperity. And the IRI was not the brainchild of the free market but an instrument of Mussolini's corporate state.) However, no one on the Right advocates donning black shirts as a fashion or political statement.

Berlusconi's short-lived administration was predicated on the notion of a comprehensive reform of the Italian state. This entailed a thorough review of policies vis-a-vis employment, fiscal policies, voting rights for overseas Italians, health care, organized crime, pensions and, yes, national unity. The latter is a telling difference between the Italian right and American conservatives. Though both espouse patriotism, Italy's right-wingers do so without pitting one region against the other. In Italy there have been far too many odious geographical comparisons. And this may be one of the reasons why the candidates of *Forza Italia* in the South fare equally as well as in the North at the polls. Whether they engage in massive projects—the long-deferred suspension bridge across the Strait of Messina—or rely on tax abatements to attract investment capital, the Italian right wing is firmly committed to bringing *il Mezzogiorno* into the Italian mainstream economically. Unlike their American and British counterparts, Italian conservatives do not operate solely on the principle of rugged individualism

*The closest equivalent in American history would be the Progressivism of Teddy Roosevelt, the president who imposed government authority on corporations and who put the United States on the world stage.*

but rather on the concept of national benefit. The closest equivalent in American history would be the Progressivism of Teddy Roosevelt, the president who imposed government authority on corporations and who put the United States on the world stage.

For a short while the Right squeaked into power. Elections are won through alliances and coalitions. As Prime Minister, Berlusconi hosted the glittering 1995 G-7 Summit meeting in Naples. He seemed headed for international prominence but was derailed by personal legal problems and a renegade coalition partner.

Today, Italy is led by Giuliano Amato, the socialist treasury chief whose fiscal conservatism helped make *il Bel Paese* a founding member of Europe's common currency, the euro.

Although chosen as an interim premier by President Carlo Azeglio Ciampi following the resignation of Prime Minister Massimo D'Alema, Amato has vowed to dismantle Italy's bloated bureaucracy and push through much-needed electoral reforms.

Know as "Dr. Subtle" for his adroit negotiating skills, Amato can also be quite forceful during a crisis. While serving as prime minister during 1992, he displayed the mettle of a Roman emperor in dispatching a contingent of Italian troops to quash an outbreak of mafia terrorism in Sicily. The bold stroke greatly debilitated the island's so-called criminal octopus.

Even the former Prime Minister D'Alema, a reformed Communist, inched his way to the right as Italy's leader during the war in Kosovo.



The Right-wing opposition (Il Polo, The Pole): Gianfranco Fini (National Alliance), Pierferdinando Casini (Christian Democrats), Silvio Berlusconi (Forza Italia).

*Continued on page 26*

#### QUICK REFERENCE TO COMPARE U.S. AND ITALIAN CONSERVATIVES

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Taxes	As required	Tax cuts forever
Censorship	To protect secular values	To protect religious values
Federalism	Strong central gov't	States' Rights
Natural Resources	Government control	Corporate control
Nationalism	Global assertiveness	Leaning toward Isolationism
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# Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza

Born January 25, 1852 - Rome Italy  
Died September 14, 1905 - Dakar, Senegal

By the late 1800s the European powers were scrambling to divide the huge continent of Africa among themselves. The rivalry among explorers and countries was intense, and there were inevitably losers and winners. Brazza may be considered a winner. Largely through his efforts his adopted country, France, claimed a significant portion of the Congo. But Brazza would come to fight against the ruthless exploitation of the African population that occurred as these new territories were opened to commercial development.

Pierre-Paul-Francois-Camille Savorgnan de Brazza was born in Rome on January 25, 1852, the descendant of an aristocratic family. His father was an Italian nobleman who was prominent in nationalist and cultural circles. From the time he was a boy, Brazza was interested in a career at sea. Italy did not have a navy of its own, so Brazza received permission to continue his studies at the naval academy in France. Having become intensely loyal to France, he received his French citizenship in 1874. After serving in the French navy during the Franco-Prussian War, Brazza was assigned to the South Atlantic fleet and visited the western coast of Africa between 1882 and 1884. Although a previous French expedition had unsuccessfully tried to penetrate the interior of Gabon, Brazza believed that it could be done. If the Ogooue River connected with the Lualaba River, he would have access to the upper Congo, which the English explorer David Livingstone had recently discovered.

## Voyage to the Congo

The French ministry approved his proposals, and Brazza set off from Bordeaux in August 1875. He was only 23 years old. He stopped at a trading post called Lambarene, a place that later became famous as the site of Dr. Albert Schweitzer's hospital. He sailed up the Ogooue only to find that it did not connect with the Lualaba. He then traveled overland to the Alima River, a tributary of the Congo, but was unable to follow it because of hostile tribes. Brazza never knew how close he had come until, shortly after he

*Largely through his efforts his adopted country, France, claimed a significant portion of the Congo.*



had returned to France, he learned that Henry Morton Stanley had successfully navigated the Congo River.

Brazza's expedition made him a hero in France, and he was approached by an agent of King Leopold of Belgium to help him claim further possessions in the Congo. Brazza, ever loyal to France, instead warned the French government of Leopold's intentions. The French government, now determined to claim part of the Congo, immediately approved an expedition with Brazza in charge. The purpose was to outmaneuver Stanley, who at this time was working for Leopold. Brazza's specific goal was to gain possession of the territory in the region of Stanley Pool, a large natural lake on the lower Congo.

## Establishment of French control in the Congo

Brazza left France on his second expedition on December 27, 1879, with a small force of 11 Senegalese sailors. He rapidly worked his way up the Ogooue and then

crossed the watershed to a river, called the Olumo by local tribes, that turned out to be the Congo. Along the way Brazza asked the local chiefs to acknowledge French sovereignty. He signed a treaty with one of the most powerful chiefs, Makoko, on September 10, 1880. This accord gave France part of the right bank of the Congo and the adjacent territory. Brazza then went to the village of N'Tamo and set up a post under his Senegalese sergeant; the post would eventually grow into the city of Brazzaville, now the capital of the Congo Republic.

From the new post Brazza traveled down the Congo and actually met Stanley at the village of Vivi near the mouth of the river on November 7, 1880. Brazza had won the race for France; when Stanley finally reached Stanley Pool, he found that the French had firmly established their authority on the west bank of the river. Brazza continued along the coast back to Libreville in Gabon, establishing supply posts and reinforcing France's claim to the territory. In 1881, however, Brazza was abruptly recalled to France. Trying to gain diplomatically what Stanley had lost, King Leopold had convinced the French government to give all of the Congo to Belgium.

Back in France, Brazza immediately started a campaign to convince the French government and the public of the potential value of colonies along the Congo. When Brazza and Stanley exchanged insults during a dinner in Paris organized to honor Stanley, the imagination of the French people was aroused. The vacillating French government finally confirmed the treaty with Makoko in December 1882.

## Appointment as colonial governor

Brazza left on his third expedition with a large force to clearly establish French occupation of the Congo. Meanwhile, the great powers of Europe met in Berlin in November 1884 to divide up the African continent. As a result of Brazza's activities, what is now Gabon, Congo, and the Central African Republic were awarded to France.

*Continued on page 27*





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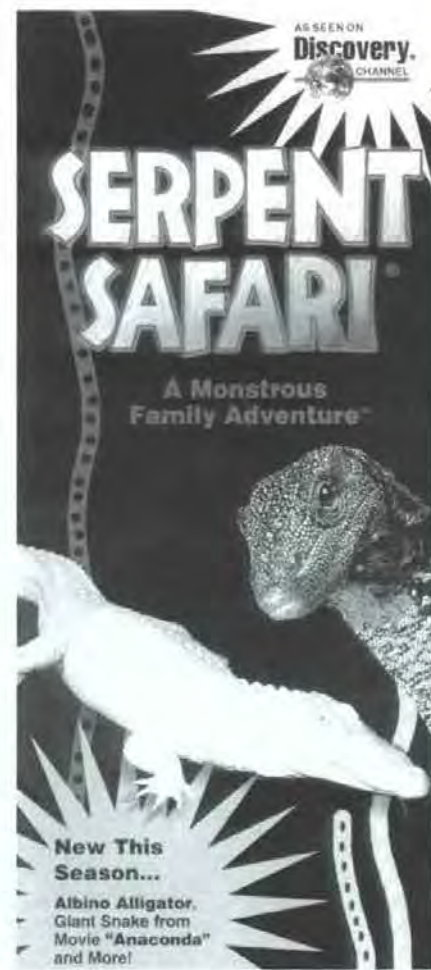




# Reptile Dysfunction *by Bill Del Cerro*

Lou Daddano of Gurnee, Illinois, is one of the world's leading herpetoculturists—a fancy word for reptile lover. A childhood fascination with snakes and alligators has been parlayed into Serpent Safari, a combination reptile zoo/educational facility located in a suburban shopping mall. Although directly across from the Rainforest Cafe, a national restaurant chain with a *faux* Brazilian forest motif, there's nothing fake about Daddano's place. His 8,000 square foot facility, licensed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, features over 40 real-live reptiles, including his prized possession: "Baby," a 26 foot, 403 lb. Burmese python. Daddano's "serpentino" was recently certified by the Guinness Book of World Record as the largest snake on the planet.

*(Note: Even baby snakes have tantrums: In 1996, Daddano was nearly crushed to death by a python, a case which made national headlines. Perhaps the spirit of his gladiator ancestors is what saved him?)*



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# Marcus Aurelius

## PATRIOT/PHILOSOPHER

by Alfred Cardone

He was a soldier, an emperor, and a philosopher wrapped in one. He personified the Roman devotion to duty and the Greek ideal of reflection. His writings have inspired both pagans and monotheists throughout the ages. His military campaigns bought the Roman Empire at least one hundred years of additional life. And, today, his likeness on horseback adorns Rome's city hall as though he still protects the city and nation from which he sprang.

Marcus Aurelius was born in Rome on April 20, 121. Among his immediate ancestors were senators and consuls. Emperor Hadrian made him a priest when he was only eight years old, entrusting his education to the best Roman and Greek teachers. His father died when he was still a boy and he was adopted by Hadrian's successor, Antoninus Pius, who saw in the lad a future emperor of the vast empire.

Marcus became emperor when Antoninus died in 161. But it was to be a turbulent reign. Rome's enemies began to press hard on her eastern frontiers. The years of expansion now became the years of defense. Italy and her dominions began that struggle which was to become first decline, then fall.

Within a year of his elevation Marcus Aurelius had to deal with a takeover of Armenia, which acted as a sort of buffer state between Rome and Parthia, a Persian/Iranian nation. The Parthians then successfully invaded Roman Cappadocia and Syria. Marcus immediately dispatched an army which eventually captured and destroyed the Parthian twin capitals of Seleucia and Ctesiphon in 165.

The Romans had effectively strengthened the frontier of Euphrates and also remained in occupation of northern Mesopotamia. Parthia was neutralized as a threat for a number of years. Tragically, the Roman legions brought back the plague from Seleucia to Italy and the west. Entire legions and districts were wiped out, depriving Rome of much needed manpower and crippling the empire economically.

As luck would have it another crisis soon

threatened Rome's northern frontier. In 167, the Quadi and Marcomanni, fierce Germanic tribes, burst through the Danube frontier and invaded what is now Austria and Hungary causing terrible destruction and even besieging the Italian city of Aquileia near today's Venice on the Adriatic Sea. Aquileia withstood the siege, but more German tribes crossed the Danube that year invading Hungary and Greece. Marcus Aurelius faced a crisis far graver than any other emperor before him. The military threat of these invasions was compounded by the ravages of the eastern plague on Rome's

*He was a champion of  
the poor and founded  
many schools, orphanages  
and hospitals.*



manpower and finances. Marcus demanded contributions from the aristocracy in the provinces and even sold imperial property to raise money. He took exceptional measures to recruit the necessary number of troops, even mobilizing some slaves, a troubling precedent.

Campaigning vigorously against the Marcomanni, the Quadi and the Samatii from 170 to 175, Marcus' legions gradually defeated them in a series of bitter battles,

pushing the terrible invaders out of Roman territory. During these years, at his headquarters near present day Belgrade, the fighting emperor began his famous philosophical work, *Meditations*. Written in Greek, the *Meditations* seem oddly out of place during a time when death and suffering were a daily event. Marcus, no doubt, found solace in the reflections.

As the campaigns reached their conclusion, thousands of Roman prisoners were liberated and some one hundred thousand barbarian prisoners were taken. In the Roman spirit, Marcus granted trading rights to the defeated barbarians, and allowed them a degree of controlled immigration into the empire as agricultural laborers. Some of these settlers were eventually hired by the Romans to fight against their fellow barbarians. Although these measures did help weaken the barbarian pressure across the Danube, they also contributed to the gradual ethnic transformation of the Roman world, which proved to be one of the key factors in bringing down the empire in the west.

The plans of Marcus to permanently reduce these hostile tribes to client status were interrupted by a rebellion in the east led by the Roman governor of Egypt and Syria. The rebellion was probably inspired by a false report of the emperor's death on the northern frontier. The rebellion failed and the governor was killed by a centurion. Nonetheless, Marcus felt obliged to travel to the eastern provinces to restore order and authority.

The emperor returned to Rome in 176, where he fell ill with fever. He recovered, however, under the care of the physician Galen. Once again, he was forced to depart for the northern frontier to meet the renewed threat from the Marcomanni and the Quadi. The Roman legions moved forward in the summer of 177 and again defeated the enemy. Marcus collected a sizeable force from the armies on the Rhine and Danube for another major campaign which he launched in 179. The Romans won another resounding victory, and Marcus set up his winter headquarters near Belgrade. His bold

*Continued on page 26*





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# A Classical Gadget Guy

by Bill Dal Cerro

**W**hen it comes to collecting antiques, Italian Americans, as expected, manage to leave a distinctive mark. What may be a harmless hobby for most people is transformed into a passionate obsession, combining playfulness with elegance.

Jasper B. Sanfilippo, Jr. is CEO of John B. Sanfilippo & Son, one of the largest full-scale nut processing companies in the U.S. Founded by Sanfilippo's father, John, in 1922, the Chicago area business has a 500,000 square foot plant as well as factories across the country, where they package and distribute shelled nuts of every variety.

Yet, Jasper Sanfilippo's engineering acumen, which modernized the company's machinery, thus enabling the company to succeed so phenomenally, is also put at the service of his private hobby: collecting, as he says, "all things mechanical"—phonographs, coin-operated pianos, steam engines, arcade machines, music boxies, theater pipe organs and, most impressively, full-scale, turn-of-the-century musical carousels... including an 1890's French model 40 feet tall and 88 feet wide!

"I have a mechanical background and I love artifacts," Sanfilippo says modestly, a childlike innocence lighting up his professional businessman's demeanor. "I've always been something of an antiquer. I was lucky enough to succeed in a business which gave me the financial ability to pursue my interests."

Sanfilippo began collecting his rare trinkets in the mid-70s, housing his music machine collection in his home. By the early 80's, however, his antiques, including a 1927 Wurlitzer theater organ, required continual additions to his estate. A new storage barn was built in 1989, with another major addition made to the living area of his home in 1990. Sanfilippo's so-named "Victorian Palace" is now open for charitable events throughout the year, where dinner guests never fail to be awed by entering a magical "toyland" for adults.

"The artistry of the carousels is very ornate, very detailed," says Sanfilippo. "The carousels weren't for kids; they were designed for the elite. They were real works of art, with highly carved wood facades and delicately rendered figures. They're truly beautiful."



\* \* \*





## Marcus Aurelius

Continued from page 23

strategy was to extend the Roman frontier northward from the Danube to the more defensible Carpathian Mountains and Vistula River. This would create two new provinces of Marcomannia and Sarmatia. Tragically, Marcus died of the plague on March 17, 180 in Vindobona, now Vienna, before he could launch this last great campaign.

Although Marcus was forced to spend the majority of his reign defending the empire's northern frontiers, he was especially concerned with public welfare, and even sold his personal possessions to raise money to help relieve the suffering from famine and plague in the empire. He was a champion of the poor and founded many schools, orphanages and hospitals. His laws also helped widows, minors and even slaves. He reduced the tax burden on the people and lessened the severity of the criminal laws. Marcus accomplished this primarily through his hundreds of imperial rescripts. These were a Roman emperor's replies to a magistrate's questions about a point of law. He also played a prominent role as a judge, placing great stress on indulgence. He improved the administration of justice by increasing the number of court days, as well as the number of judges.

With his strong belief in the individual's duty to the state, Marcus held a negative view of the early Christians with their lack of concern for this world and for the fate of the empire. He shared the typical Roman view of Christians as potentially dangerous and

subversive dissidents. As a result, the Christians did suffer under his reign, particularly in the provinces.

Marcus Aurelius was a scholar and thinker by nature, forced to play the role of a warrior to defend the empire from the barbarians. He was a gifted philosopher. His *Meditations*, a compendium of twelve books of moral precepts and observations on life, is an important philosophical work which champions Stoicism, and stresses the virtues of reason, wisdom, justice, fortitude, duty and moderation. Marcus Aurelius remains history's best example of Plato's ideal ruler, the philosopher-king. As the following passage from *Meditations* expresses, however, he was above all a Roman with a keen sense of duty.

*"Hour by hour resolve firmly, like a Roman and a man, to do what comes to hand with correct and natural dignity, and with humanity, independence and justice. . . The good within you should preside over a being who is virile and mature, a statesman, a Roman, and a ruler. . ."*

But he was also a human being who could reflect on the abstract:

*"For there is one universe out of all, one god through all, one substance and one law, one common reason of all intelligent creatures and one truth..."*

Behold the man: his tireless dedication to duty, gallant defense of the Empire against terrible invasions, brilliant statesmanship and philosophical writings, humanity and compassion have made Marcus Aurelius one of Rome's greatest emperors and a model for all rulers to this day.



He Still "Rules" from Rome's City Hall.

## Right vs. Right

Continued from page 17

Though he was against Allied bombing his policy paralleled that of the Right. Similarly, D'Alema did not flinch from adopting tough stances with respect to Turkey's oppression of the Kurds, the on-again-off again Palestinian-Israeli peace talks and Israel's entrance into key U.N. groups as a European member. He even upbraided Bill Clinton for not seeking swift enough redress for the Italian victims of American negligence in the Mt. Cermis ski lift tragedy. The normally adroit Clinton was left speechless as the Italian prime minister scolded him in a joint press conference in Washington D.C. covered by CNN.

Clearly, Italy's right-wing has had a profound impact on the nation's governance.

Conservatives hold the key to Italy's success in the 21st century. The philosophy of the Right has a special appeal to Italians—north and south. It conjures up images of an orderly, law-abiding, civic-minded and prosperous polity with roots in the nation's ancient Roman past. Not long ago, a poll of Italians found Gianfranco Fini, the post-Fascist, to be the most respected politician in Italy.

The nation is poised for an institutional breakthrough and is yearning for constitutional reform that will result in either a directly elected prime minister or a presidential republic. These are all long-held intellectual and political concepts espoused by Italian conservatives. A recent referendum by D'Alema on this question failed by one per-

centage point. It need not do so again. What the center-left could not achieve, the sinewy Right may be able to accomplish.

Some think that *Forza Italia's* Berlusconi needs to step aside because of his personal vulnerability to private sector scandals.

However, the victory of Italy's center-right coalition—known as *il Polo*—in the recent regional elections has set the stage for Silvio Berlusconi's return to power in the general elections next year. Barring any separatist shenanigans by Umberto Bossi's Northern League, this time *Forza Italia* can make the critical difference in Italy's future. *Forza Italia sara' la forza del destino.*



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## A Review

*Continued from page 19*

King Leopold was given the Congo Free State, now Congo Republic, as his personal territory.

In 1886 Brazza was appointed governor of the new French colony, where he served for a number of years. He personally supervised and coordinated numerous expeditions that solidified French claims between the Congo River and Lake Chad, thus containing German penetration from Cameroon. During that time he tried to develop the colony without violating the rights of the Africans. Brazza, however, was hindered in his efforts by the French government, which refused to invest the money that would have allowed for orderly growth and commerce. Brazza also opposed the issuing of large land grants to private firms, a policy that was pursued by Leopold in the adjoining territory. Leopold's holdings were ruled by private interests that made immense fortunes by exploiting the African labor force. Brazza was relieved of his position in 1898 as a result of flimsy charges made by Jean-Baptiste Marchand, a French explorer who had been

sent to Africa the previous year to control the headwaters of the White Nile River.

### **Brazza's investigation into European brutality**

Following Brazza's departure the French adopted Leopold's policy of granting concessions to large commercial companies to see if the Congo could be developed by private interests. In 1904 the situation in both the Congo Free State and the French Congo became an international scandal when enterprising journalists and public servants, such as Edmund Morel and Roger Casement, revealed that Africans were being brutalized and murdered for profit. The French government called Brazza out of retirement to Brazza arrived in Libreville on April 29, 1905. He traveled in the colony for more than four months, encountering general hostility and deliberate noncooperation by the colonial civil service. He wrote a report attacking the conditions he found in the area. Saddened and ill with dysentery, Brazza left for France but died on the way in Dakar, Senegal (then part of French West Africa), on



**Brazza's explorations covered Congo, Congo Republic, Gabon, and Central African Republic. Brazzaville is now the capital of Congo Republic (across from Congo's capital Kinshasa.)**

September 14, 1905. The French Parliament voted to suppress Brazza's report because it was considered too damaging to the prestige of France. Had he lived longer, Brazza might have seen at least some of those abuses eliminated.

*(from Explorers and Discoverers, published by U•X•L, an Imprint of Gate Research, copyright 1995)*





# Announcement

I am the best-selling author writing a novel about a unit of Black American soldiers who served in Italy during World War II. I am seeking information from any Italian Americans who have relatives here or in North Italy (the Tuscany region) who have had any contact with these units -- however minor. Any anecdotes and memories from this period would be greatly appreciated.

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# A Model City

by Bob Masullo

A trip to Rome can give you an idea what life was like when Italic power was at its peak. The ancient structures that abound in the modern city demonstrate clearly that the Romans built things well.

Some, like the Forum, are in ruins, but others, such as the Pantheon, are in remarkably good shape.

What, you'll almost certainly wonder, did Ancient Rome look like when all the buildings were in their prime?

To find that out, however, you do not need to leave the United States. A trip to eastern Massachusetts or southern California will suffice.

There are marvelous miniature recreations of Ancient Rome in Waltham, Massachusetts (near Boston), and in Los Angeles, both labors of love by Robert W. Garbisch.

Garbisch, 54, has been fascinated by the Roman Empire since high school days, when he helped his brother build a small model of Rome for a history class project.

"Ever since I've admired and respected [the people of ancient Italy]" said Garbisch, who is of German ancestry. "They created the Pax Romana, the 200-year period of peace and prosperity that has yet to be matched by any other civilization. I've often thought it would have been a very good time to be alive. I know I would like to have lived then."

Although he has an extensive knowledge of history and is quite skilled at sculpting and model-building, Garbisch is not a professional in those fields. His "day job" for 33 years has been as a firefighter in El Cerrito, California, although when *The Italic Way* spoke to him he was expecting to retire shortly.

"I'm looking forward to retirement," he said, "because then I'll be able to devote more time to Roman history and miniature constructions."

He was planning to work on a model of the Temple of Venus and part of the Coliseum next. Additions to the existing displays, each of which contain dozens of buildings, will also be made "from time to time."

Garbisch has visited Rome twice and hopes to go again. He said, "I was very impressed by what I saw and pleased by the good efforts that the Italians are making to preserve these treasures for future generations."

The Waltham exhibit, which depicts Rome circa 179 A.D., is housed permanently in the Goldfarb Library on the campus of Brandeis University. It can be visited whenever the library is open. Call (781) 736-4621 for hours.

The Los Angeles exhibit, which is set in the Rome of 205 A.D., is in the Carole & Barry Kaye Museum of Miniatures. Call (323) 937-7766 for hours.



In character giving The Pax Romana.





## Deep Roots in America

Continued from page 15

in old land records. He was, allegedly, the first to grow tobacco in Brooklyn (not a staple of the area today) and owned a house on Broad Street in Manhattan's financial district. In 1657, there was a mass migration of 300 Piedmontese Protestants to New Amsterdam.



General Luigi Palma Di Cesnola, Civil War Medal of Honor winner

Later that year they sailed on to settle in Delaware.

In nearby Maryland, a Catholic colony, a law was passed in 1649 to allow Italians to own property. They must have had a good reputation to earn that privilege. Two future signers of the

Declaration of Independence, William Paca and Caesar Rodney, sprang from these roots.

There are documents attesting to an Italian presence in nearly all the English colonies. Philadelphia records reveal a number of families and professionals living there in the 1700's. Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Georgia were homes to early Italian settlers.

In Florida, about 1,400 Greeks and Italians were recruited to establish a colony near St. Augustine (New Smyrna) in 1768. Here, though, they were treated as slaves by their Scottish sponsor and soon rebelled. In a taste of times, to come these Mediterraneans were considered a lesser breed. Within five years their numbers dwindled to 600 and a leader by the name of Carlo Forni emerged to challenge the would-be slavers. Demanding the right to return to Europe, Forni and an Italo-Greek band of 250 men imprisoned the overseers and impounded as many supplies and boats they could. However, the English soon recaptured the boats and had Forni executed by one of the Greeks in return for his freedom.

As early as the 1700's Italian colonists were introducing their culture to the new continent. Just before the Revolution, colonial newspapers advertised Italian sausage, olive oil and vermicelli in Philadelphia, and Italian pastries in New York. Italian fireworks celebrated colonial holidays 200 years

before the Grucci family. Italian musicians, doctors, artists, dancers, and cooks were the mark of civilized cities along the East Coast.

### The Revolution

As our roots were deep in the discovery and settlement of this continent, so too were they in the foundation of the United States. Three men in particular had a significant part in separating the colonies from the mother country — Philip Mazzei, William Paca and Caesar Rodney.

Mazzei was a Florentine by birth who hobnobbed with the likes of Thomas Jefferson, Patrick Henry, and George Washington in Virginia. A surgeon by training, he spent his short time in America experimenting with vineyards and Italian vegetable production as well as importing Italian foodstuffs. Although Jefferson thought him a bit eccentric he nevertheless praised Mazzei for his part in pushing the colonies toward independence. Mazzei did so by helping to convince the Virginia gentry that the British could not be trusted. Through letters, newspaper articles, speeches, and conversations, the Florentine brought a European view of America's conflict to the Founding Fathers. It convinced many of them that European sympathy for their independence could translate into support. Mazzei's strong belief in the Roman

concept of natural rights was conveyed in his writing, "*Tutti gli uomini sono per natura egualmente liberi e indipendenti*" which later found its way into Jefferson's Declaration as "...all men are created equal..." (Jefferson was a student of Italian.)

Soon after the war of separation began, Mazzei was urged to return to Europe as an agent of Virginia to drum up support — moral and material. Thomas Jefferson, upon Mazzei's death in 1816, wrote, "...his early and zealous cooperation in the establishment of our independence having acquired for him a great degree of favor [among Ameri-

cans]."

William Paca (PAY-cah) was American born and of mixed heritage. As late as the 1930's the Paca family acknowledged their Italian roots. As a delegate from Maryland to the Philadelphia Congress in 1776, Paca voted for independence and added his name to the document. Another delegate, Caesar Rodney of Delaware, has been researched and found to have Italian roots back to Sir Julius Caesar (Adelmare), mentioned above.

Another Italian who quite literally helped add five new "states" to the union during the revolution was Francis Vigo, who was born near Torino and settled in New Orleans in 1774. Fluent in French and English, Vigo became the most influential trader in the Northwest territories, the vast tract of land that now encompasses Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, Michigan and Ohio. Recently lost to the English at the close of the French & Indian War (1763), the region was only tenuously British. In 1778, George Rogers Clark (later of the Lewis & Clark Expedition) sought to make the Northwest Territory American. Francis Vigo not only subsidized the campaign but managed to keep the Indians neutral. He further advised Clark when to strike the British at Fort Vincennes, having been held prisoner there and seen the poor defenses. Vigo's statue can be seen at Vincennes today, and in 1876 the U.S. Supreme Court awarded Vigo's heirs nearly \$50,000 in repayment of his loan to General Clark.

Other Italic men joined the colors during the Revolution. Even with distorted anglicized names, Italians can be discerned on the list of Continental combatants. In New York State some 49 members of the Fonda family participated in the war. In Virginia, two of the Tagliaferro clan fought as officers. Colonel Richard Tagliaferro was killed in 1781. In North Carolina, Col. Cosimo Medici commanded cavalry units. Others named Baldi (Baldi), De Angelis, Bellini, Rossi, and Gully (Gulli?) were sprinkled among the roster of American soldiery. With the French intervention also came royal troops recruited from Italy's Piedmont region fighting along side Washington's troops. The Third Piedmont and the Thirteenth Du Perche totaled about 1,500 men.

Once the new nation became a reality, the Founding Fathers fully adopted the institutions of Classical Italy to rule the United



Admiral Bancroft Gherardi, Civil War veteran with a naval career spanning 40 years. He contributed to the creation of the modern navy.

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## Deep Roots in America

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States — the tri-part form of government (legislative, judicial, and executive), the veto, the symbols of the eagle and fasces, Latin mottos, and a domed Capitol. Italian artists and sculptors were hired to complete the grand look. Even the first Marine band was recruited in Italy in 1805.

### The Civil War

As the United States expanded to the Pacific, Italian-Americans served in government and the armed forces. In the War of 1812 and the Mexican War, men of Italian origin fought. Overseas, an Italian named Salvatore Catalano piloted U.S. naval vessels to the “shores of Tripoli” aided by Neapolitan gunboats to defeat the Barbary pirates. But, it was in the Civil War that numerous Italians and Italian Americans were inspired to fight by the exploits of the world’s greatest revolutionary of his time—Giuseppe Garibaldi. Some fought for the Union others, raised in the South fought for the Confederacy. It is almost a mathematical certainty that thousands of mixed blood and assimilated Italic people marched off to that fratricidal war.

One of the more colorful units of that conflict was the Garibaldi Guard, named for

the “hero of two worlds.” (Garibaldi was offered a general’s rank by President Lincoln but the warrior turned it down when Lincoln would not commit to freeing the slaves. The Emancipation Proclamation wasn’t signed for another two years.) Nevertheless, the Guard attracted many foreigners including about 50 Italians, and fought from Bull Run to Appomattox. At least eight of the Italians perished at Gettysburg.

Italian Americans finally reached the ranks of general officers in this war: Brigadier General Francis Spinola, Brigadier Luigi Palma di Cesnola (Medal of Honor winner), and Major General Edward Ferrero. Every rank below was also represented in both Army and Navy. In the Confederacy the Italian population along the Gulf Coast was ample enough to provide thousands of combatants. There was a unit called the Italian Guards that numbered 500. Italian names like Arrighi, Pico, Festorazzi, Barziza, and Sanguinetti can be found in the muster rolls of the Rebels. As noted above, even General Beauregard had Italian blood.

It is easy to overlook the Italian presence in America before the mass migrations. Early assimilation, selective histories, and the changing of Italian surnames all militate against an accurate estimate of our early contributions. Yet other ethnic groups have been



The new United States quarter with Declaration signer Caesar Rodney, descendent of Sir Julius Caesar (Adelmare) shown on page 13.

successful in keeping alive their roots notwithstanding the relative size of their communities or contributions. History books teach American children of Crispus Attucks, a Negro killed during the Boston Massacre. Everyone knows of Polish generals *Koziosko*, and Pulaski, or the German Von Steuben, or the Frenchman Lafayette; they are the stuff of legends. As is one of the financiers of the Revolution *Jacob Solomon(?)*, a Jew. But to ignore and to bury what the Italic people did for America, and this continent, is a gross oversight.

(Don Fiore assisted in this article)

## A Review

Continued from page 11

of Machecha’s lawyer, Thomas J. Semmes (Davison), the nine Italians who first stood trial were acquitted. Instead of being immediately released, however, they were ordered (illegally) to return to Parish Prison to “lie in wait” for another outstanding charge of “intent to commit murder” (which was officially rendered moot by the jury’s decision). The Italians became, in effect, lambs awaiting the slaughter: a “mass meeting” was called by rabble-rousing politicians the next morning, promising the outraged citizens “to take steps to remedy the failure of justice in the Hennessy case.”

That they did soon enough. The movie, like the book, rivets your attention during this bone-chilling manhunt. Meyer’s direction rises to the challenge, though one aches for the steely-eyed reality that the Italian neorealists might have brought to it. The angry crowds are obviously just extras chanting on cue; Meyer lacks the gift of personalizing them, a la Gillo Pontecorvo or

Sergei Eisenstein. Yet it’s hard to forget the sweat-soaked faces of the victims, twisted with fright, as they’re being chased around the prison and its courtyards.

The film ends with a brief title summoning up the after-effects of the incident: the U.S.-Italy stand-off (which was very real: the Italians had a much more powerful standing navy than the U.S. did at the time), and the eventual take-over of the docks by the Anglo power brokers. The Sicilians, as we know, didn’t stop coming to New Orleans; they grew and prospered, eventually electing two mayors—Robert Maestri in the 1930’s and Victor Schiro in the 1960’s. The current Piazza d’Italia in downtown New Orleans, created by local business dynamo Joe Maselli, is a visual tribute to their triumphs and tragedies in creating this great American city.

HBO’s unwillingness to promote this rare positive portrayal of our community with the same resources and energy that it

has devoted to a fictional New Jersey crime boss and his charmingly depraved street crew is symptomatic of a much larger problem. “You want respect?” the proud, imprisoned Joseph Machecha shouts to his fellow Italian inmates, as they shiver with despair in the darkness. “Behave as though you have earned it!” We have, of course, earned it, yet the powers-that-be have figuratively—and sometimes literally—strangled and bludgeoned it out of us. The biggest tribute that Italian Americans can give to the suffering of their ancestors is to seek out their story via books and movies like *Vendetta* and educate themselves.

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[Note: This movie is now available at Blockbuster Video Stores]







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