



THE Italic Way

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*NANCY PELOSI
SPEAKER OF THE UNITED
STATES HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES*

**ARE WE THERE YET -
ITALIAN AMERICAN
PROGRESS REPORT**

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The Italic Way

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Tidbits

Professor Larissa Bonfante



LINGUINE AL CANE

Gibson loves pizza but he's crazy for linguine and clam sauce. Doesn't sound like a news item, but Gibson is a Great Dane. The giant 175-pound pooch belongs to northern California breeder Sandy Hall. He stood over 42.2" from floor to shoulder when the *Guinness Book of Records* named him the world's tallest dog. He has grown since! When he stands straight up Gibson measures 7' 2". How did the big fellow learn to eat clam sauce? His master, Sandy, is Italian.



ETRUSCAN CHIC

Before there was a Tuscany it was Etruria, home of the Etruscan people. According to classics professor Larissa Bonfante, America's expert on these mysterious people who passed on their secrets and genes to the Italic peoples of the peninsula centuries before Christ, Etruscans rarely get the attention they deserve. Their culture thrived throughout ancient Italy, not just Tuscany. They surpassed even the Greek colonists of southern Italy in their enlightened treatment of women and in engineering. Prof. Bonfante is their spiritual ambassador in America and she was honored by the Archeological Institute of America with their Gold Medal in 2007. In celebration, Bonfante donned Etruscan garb.



EVERYBODY IS 'ITALIAN'

Don't begrudge Irish Americans if they seize an opportunity. When the producers of *The Sopranos* wanted to "Italianize" the New Jersey business district where Tony and gang had their fictional headquarters, they asked the Irish-American Association next door to replace their Irish flag with an Italian one. Switching sides earned the Old Sodders \$20,000 from HBO. Hoist one for Tony! Where do Italian American groups sign up for the gravy train?

GOINGS ON



For those devotees of *The Sopranos* who don't realize Tony and friends are of Italian extraction, the show gives them a subtle hint.



Courageous Stand

When his middle school in Batavia, Illinois, did a cast call for an original play penned by a faculty member, 13-year-old Johnny Levato took the script home to show his mom. Actually, it wasn't so original. It was a *Sopranos* parody for school children, loaded with Italian stereotypes. When mom Marina objected to school officials she made enemies fast. When she went to court to stop the play she became a community pariah. The court said it was just freedom of speech, not a protection of minors issue, even if a student did not write the play and the adult teacher coached them to do Italian stereotypes. Marina and Johnny lost their battle and Johnny enrolled in a private school. Here, our Vice Chairman, Midwest, Don Fiore, presents Marina and Johnny with the Italic Institute's highest award, the Silver Medallion, for their courageous defense of the Italian heritage. With the award came \$1,000 for Johnny's tuition.



Travels With Bill

Our globe-trekking vice president Bill Dal Cerro accomplished quite a lot in 2007. His biggest coup was seeing the completion of our joint-venture documentary *And They Came to Chicago*. Bill conceived the project and opened the doors for co-producer Modio Media. Here Bill (r) is with Dan Soles of Chicago's WTTW (l) and Larry Wert (c) of NBC affiliate Channel 5. This 70-minute saga of the Italian presence in Chicagoland was shown on both public and commercial television, a rare feat. The Italic Institute has now produced three professional documentaries on the Italian heritage.

One phase of Bill's promotional tour for the new documentary took him to Springfield, Illinois and a quick visit with President Lincoln at the Lincoln Museum. Bill is seen here with the late Lincoln family and Museum Director Tom Schwartz (the live one in the middle). Italian American historian Dom Candeloro, who coordinated the screening is to the right of the former president.



Winging his way to Italy, Bill met with newly elected Senator Renato Turano (left photo), the first representative from America in the Italian Parliament. Senatore Turano's company, Turano Bakery of Chicago, donated \$10,000 to *And They Came to Chicago*.

While in Rome, Bill also met with Darius Arya of the American Institute of Roman Culture. Our adopted monument, the Altar of Augustan Peace, was the subject of discussion.



Nefertiti Gets A Race Job

Lenox, the famous New Jersey china manufacturer, is dabbling in historical revisionism to expand its market. A new product, a reproduction of Nefertiti, the Sun Queen, takes some historical liberties. Lenox has singlehandedly, and maybe underhandedly, mutated Nefertiti from a Hametic Caucasian into a sub-Saharan Negroid in a blatant marketing ploy. Note the dissimilarities in the original Egyptian bust of Nefertiti and her mummy with Caucasian hair to the new and improved Lenox version. There is a disclaimer, of course: "Nefertiti is Lenox's interpretation of this noble figure." We hate to step on anyone's dreams, but no good can come of this crass manipulation of facts. It falls into the same racism that gives Romans characters British accents in the movies.



The Italian Way

The world's first super highway was opened in Italy between Milan and Varese on September 21, 1924. It was a toll road built by the national government that eventually linked up with other *autostrade* into a national highway system. Italy pioneered this concept. It had all the hallmarks of today's superhighways: rest stops, service stations and police patrols. Tolls varied by vehicle type and there was a surcharge for vehicles that didn't have pneumatic rubber tires (Wagons, Ho!). *Atlantica Magazine*, an upscale Italian American journal, had this to say about Italy's preeminence in its April, 1931 issue:

These new Italian "autostrade" have aroused the admiration of the world, and what is more, imitation, "the sincerest form of flattery." In Germany and France, for example, committees for that purpose have been formed, often with the aid of Italian engineers and experts. And in Spain, Portugal, Egypt and Argentina movements are underway to adopt the "autostrada" system after the Italian fashion. The movement is gaining strength, and it is not too much to say that before long these "autostrade" may be destined to replace old automobile roads in practically all the civilized countries of the world, especially the United States, with heavy automobile traffic.

The American motorist will appreciate what it would mean for his driving comfort and enjoyment to substitute, for his customary snail's pace Sunday drive along clogged roads, with the many stops at intersections, the constant care exercised to avoid pedestrians or cars ahead which stop suddenly, etc. – a drive along wide smooth-paved concrete roads, with no slow traffic to impede his enjoyment, and with plenty of opportunities for occasionally – and safely – "stepping on the gas."

Rudy Berated

This political cartoon accompanied an op-ed piece in September 11th's *Newsday* written by our own Rosario Iaconis, Vice Chairman, East. Rosario took presidential contender Rudy Giuliani to task for turning his heritage into a running mafia gag with imitations of Marlon Brando's *Godfather* and sprinkling interviews with mob jargon. In true American fashion, Rosario advised Italo voters not to support Rudy solely on the basis of ethnic pride.



If They Only Knew...

Back in 1933, there was an exchange of opinions regarding the question of Italian American youth. Peter Sammartino, who later founded Fairleigh Dickenson University in New Jersey, feared that much of the second generation of Italian Americans was not adjusting well to American society because of an inferiority complex. He did not go into detail but surely being caught between a non-English speaking first generation and American prejudice was part of the problem. His solution was principally to "make the younger people feel the richness of the cultural heritage of their racial stock." In short, he preached Italian studies for the younger generation. Not everyone agreed with Sammartino. Here is one rebuttal:

"Perhaps our good friend [Sammartino] had in mind those early days of Italian immigration when Italians were called 'wops' and 'guineas' by loud-mouthed Irishmen, et al. Under such deplorable circumstances it is easy to see how many Italians and their progeny might have suffered inferiority complexes. But happily, we are now living in an era where Italy and Italians [including Italo-Americans] are rapidly becoming synonyms for distinction and culture."

GoodFellas and *The Godfather* may have changed all that.



All'Italiana

TO BE REMEMBERED 2006 & 2007

Rocco Petrone, 80, directed launch operations at Cape Kennedy Space Center from 1966-1969. It was Petrone who had responsibility for sending Apollo 11 to the first moon landing. He later went on to oversee the design, testing, certification and production of the space shuttle series for Rockwell International. In January, 1986, Petrone cautioned against launching the Challenger mission because of cold weather. His warning was not heeded and seven astronauts lost their lives.



Rocco Petrone, right, seated next to Dr. Werner von Braun in the Launch Complex 37 control center in Florida (Jan. 1964).



Walter Schirra, Jr., 84, an original U.S. astronaut who had the unique honor of being a member of each of the three manned space programs (Mercury, Gemini, Apollo) logging 295 hours in space. He once described space travel as sitting "in a flying Thermos bottle" referring to the extreme and hostile temperatures of space. The Schirra family was said to be of Italian-Swiss origin.

Peter Rodino, 95, Democratic congressman from New Jersey who presided over the Watergate impeachment hearings that led to the first resignation of a U.S. president. First elected in 1948, Rodino served continuously for 40 years. In 1976 he passed up the opportunity to run as Jimmy Carter's vice president.

Actress **Anne Bancroft** (nee' Anna Italiano), 73, was most famous for her role as Mrs. Robinson in *The Graduate*, but equally praised for her stage and screen interpretation of Annie Sullivan, teacher to Helen Keller in *The Miracle Worker*.

Luciano Pavarotti, 71, beloved Italian tenor who made the world his stage carrying his talent and passion for Italian opera and song to every continent. His signature song *Nessun Dorma* ("Let No One Sleep") ended with the powerful Italian word *vincero* (I shall conquer!) and surely he did.



Salvatore Lombino (aka Evan Hunter, Ed McBain), 78, popular author who virtually invented the American police procedural that featured a squad of detectives rather than a lone "gumshoe" and the full gamut of investigation that is now familiar fare on television. His first acclaimed novel was *The Blackboard Jungle* in

1954 written under the name Evan Hunter. He had changed his Italian name in order to be taken seriously by publishers. "If you're an Italian-American, you're not supposed to be a literate person," he once said.

Dr. Vincent Fontana, 81, pioneer in identifying and treating abused children, wrote numerous books on the subject and propagated guidelines for hospitals and doctors across the country to better detect child abuse. Prior to his specialty in children, Dr. Fontana was personal physician to President Eisenhower and Cardinal Francis Spellman of New York.

Jack Valenti, 85, went from a public relations man coordinating President John F. Kennedy's 1963 visit to Houston, Texas, to a key advisor of President Lyndon Johnson after Kennedy's assassination in Dallas. After leaving Washington, Valenti went Hollywood as head of the Motion Picture Association. He pioneered the movie rating system designating G, PG-13, R, NC-17.

Ernest Gallo, 97, who with his brother Julio changed America's drinking habits over seven decades. Gallo wines account for one out of every four bottles of wine that Americans drink. Building on their immigrant father's career in winemaking, the Gallo brothers first created an empire on cheap table and fortified wines with names like Thunderbird. However, by the 1970s the Gallos introduced fine wines that represented the best of American vineyards.

Charles Forte, 98, the British hotel magnet who immigrated to Scotland at age 4 and later became the developer of a lodging and catering business employing 41,000 people in 940 hotels and restaurants around the world. The Forte Empire includes the Travelodge chain and London's Waldorf Hotel. Forte was knighted in 1970 and took the title Baron Forte of Ripley.

Joseph Barbera, 95, the artistic genius behind cartoon immortals *The Flintstones*, *Yogi Bear*, *The Jetsons* and *Tom and Jerry*. Barbera partnered with writer William Hanna in 1940 to produce a cartoon about a cat and mouse named Jasper and Jinx. By the late 1950s



and early 60s, Hanna-Barbera dominated TV cartoon programming. [See *ItalicWay* issue IV, 1989, for animation feature article.]

Carlo Ponti, 94, Italian movie producer who brought to the screen such works as the epic *Dr. Zhivago* and *Two Women*, a tale of Allied atrocities during the conquest of Italy. Ponti was married to Sophia Loren. He also claimed a distant relation to Roman procurator Pontius Pilate.

Frankie Laine, 93, a popular singer of the 1940s and 1950s, was born Francesco Paolo LoVecchio. His hit songs included *Mule Train*, *Jezebel* and *That's My Desire*. He later did soundtracks for westerns such as *High Noon*, *Rawhide* and *Blazing Saddles*, among others.



Anita Roddick, 64, the British founder of The Body Shop chain and outspoken advocate for the environment and animal rights, was born Anita Lucia Perilli. Her cosmetic chain eventually numbered 2,000 stores in fifty countries. But, they were a means to nobler ends. She scoffed at the idea of rejuvenating cosmetics and used her enormous profits on behalf of saving rain forests, aiding the impoverished, protecting animals, defending voting rights and a myriad of other good works.

Anacleto Angelini, 93, Chilean entrepreneur who emigrated from Italy in 1948. He built Chile's largest forestry company, Empresas Copec, and had a personal fortune of \$6 billion, making him Chile's wealthiest man.

Frank Balzano, 75, encyclopedia entrepreneur who began his career with World Book Encyclopedia and retired as president of Compton's Encyclopedia just before the home computer age. In 1971, he created the first "pre-cyclopedia" for pre-school children.

ARMS AND THE MAN...

In an Italian American first, both the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff were *paesani*. General Peter Pace and Admiral Edmund Giambastiani served the nation through much of the Iraq War. Both retired this year. The U.S. military is well stocked with Italian American leaders including General Raymond Odierno, whose 4th Infantry Division captured Saddam Hussein, and General Peter Chiarelli who has advocated the pacification of Iraq through extensive public works projects. Elsewhere in the Middle East, the UN's 12,000 peacekeeping force in Lebanon is led by Italian Major General Claudio Graziano who, in turn, replaced French general Alain Pellegrini, another *paesano*. Clearly, military service is an ancient Italic tradition.



General Peter Chiarelli in Iraq, above, and General Claudio Graziano, below, in Lebanon



ITALIAN ATTITUDE

A recent survey by Pew Global Attitudes reveals that 67% of Italians are against immigration to their country from the Middle East and North Africa. However, 68% favored globalization (versus only 59% of Americans). And when it comes to culture, 70% of Italians believe theirs is superior. Only 55% of Americans and, surprisingly, 30% of the French and British thought their culture was superior to others. Other reasons Italians can be proud is that their health system was

rated #2 in the world (the U.S ranked 37th), and an Italian-built module, the Columbus Laboratory, was lifted into space by NASA as a vital addition to the International Space Station. Italian astronauts have also become a common sight in space.

L'ITALIANO, SI!

Last March, the Italian Parliament voted to make Italian the official language of Italy. Seventy-five of the lawmakers fought the resolution, claiming that the rights of dialect speakers would be trampled. One die-hard even harangued his parliamentary fellows in a Venetian dialect until his microphone was abruptly cut off. Ironically, even "standard Italian" is a dialect of Latin, the Mother Tongue of all Italians.

A WOLF COMES HOME

Italian Americans have fought in every war this nation has waged. That fact was brought home recently with the recovery of the remains of Pvt. Francis Lupo of Cincinnati from a First World War battlefield in France. Lupo, whose name means wolf, was one of 300,000 Italian Americans that served during the Great War (10% of U.S. forces). A member of the First Infantry Regiment, the 23-year old Lupo lost his life at the Second Battle of the Marne on July 21, 1918. His remains were the very first identified by the Pentagon's new P.O.W.-M.I.A. Accounting Command and have now been interred at Arlington National Cemetery. Four divisions of Italian troops also fought at the Marne and helped stop the German advance. Interestingly, it was Italian-French General Gallieni who stopped the first German invasion at the Marne in 1914 with his "Taxi-cab Army." Another coincidence is that one of the first investors and settlers in Jamestown, VA, in 1607 was a Lupo family. You can't get more American than that!



Pvt. Luigi Merola, great uncle of the Managing Editor, who was killed on the Western Front in 1918. Like Pvt. Lupo, he was one of 300,000 Italian Americans who served in the First World War

POLITICAL OVERDOSE

Partly because their 1946 constitution cursed them with a surfeit of small political parties and partly because they are cynical by nature, Italian voters are expressing disdain for the "Brahmins" who rule them. A new book, *The Caste*, not only reveals a litany of absurd pork barrel give-aways and sclerotic politicians, but it names names from Parliament to town mayors across the country. An intimidated Parliament reacted by dropping some pork and cutting their own pension abuses. Another new development is that some parties are now asking their rank and file to choose new party leaders in one huge national primary instead of backroom style. Americans should pay attention. We haven't heard our patriotic old saw, "the system works." uttered in forty years.





WORLD NOTES

MAFIA FILMMAKER ROBBED

Ironies abound as *The Godfather* director Francis Coppola claimed that his studio in Argentina was robbed last October. Thieves, perhaps the Argentine mafia, allegedly took computers and data files that represented years of work. Coppola's studio is located in the otherwise tony Palermo section of Buenos Aires. (Geography buffs know that Don Vito's hometown, Corleone, is just outside of Palermo, Sicily.) To make matters worse, the "men of honor" also filched the back-up files that Coppola had stored next to the computer. Security lesson: leave the computer, take the back-up.

THEY 'ROO THE DAY

The fine Italian hand made California a wine capital. Now, it's Australia's turn to savor Italian magic. What the Gallo family did to mass market California wines, the Castella Family is repeating Down Under. Exporting their Yellow Tail label, with its distinctive kangaroo (actually a wallaby) mascot, Castella Wines has become a giant in Australia and the United States in only six years. What sets a bottle of Yellow Tail apart is that it fills the \$6 but classy niche. Even its label is friendly and unpretentious.

Founder Filippo Castella immigrated to Australia from Sicily in the 1950s. The first shipment landed in America in June, 2001, and that first year 225,000 cases were sold. Today's sales exceed 7.5 million cases.

ROMAN JOLTS

Modern medicine is finally catching up to some old remedies. Leeches and maggots, for example, have found their way back to the doctor's medical bag. Recent developments in dealing with migraines and depression using electric stimulation of the brain closely mimic another ancient technique. In those pre-Edison and Tesla days, the only electric generators were found in the sea. Scribonius Largus, physician to Emperor Claudius (conqueror of Britannia), had this to recommend for migraines: "To immediately remove and permanently cure a headache, however long lasting and intolerable, a live black torpedo (electric eel) is put on the place which is in pain, until the pain ceases and the part grows numb." Electric stingrays will also do in a pinch.



Stingrays to relieve migraines?

Another malady, Influenza, may someday be prevented based on an old Italian observation. Italian American researcher Peter Palese of the Mt. Sinai School of Medicine in New York observed that the original Italian name for the flu is "*influenza di freddo*" or influence of the cold. Dr. Palese soon found out why. The flu virus thrives in cold dry weather, outdoors but not indoors. So, fresh air may not be the best defense.

WE'LL ALWAYS HAVE BRAZZAVILLE

For decades Africans have blamed European colonialism for all their problems. But at least one country, the Congo Republic, is beholden to an intrepid Italian explorer who first fixed the borders of their country and was its first governor for twelve years. Pierre Brazza was born in Rome in 1852, son of an Italian count. He was schooled in France and eventually led a French naval expedition to Africa where he staked out French claims. His treatment of the natives was exemplary for that time and he is still held in high esteem. As proof, not only is his name still immortalized as the capital, Brazzaville, but the nation built an impressive memorial to him last year. Few, if any, Europeans have been accorded this lasting respect anywhere in Africa. (See issue XXX for Brazza's biography). By the way, Brazzaville was the intended destination of Rick and his French police chief in the movie *Casablanca*.



ATROCITIES RECALLED

Italians are finally confronting another reality of the Second World War. An estimated 15,000 Italian men women and children living on the Istrian peninsula were massacred and dumped in mountain crevasses by Yugoslav partisans in league with Italian Communists. Their objective was ethnic cleansing and revenge against Fascism. The depths that Italian Communists were willing to plumb in their quest for power included this atrocity as well as an appeal by Palmiro Togliatti to Stalin to murder thousands of Italian prisoners of war to foment revolution in Italy. It was also Communist partisans who summarily executed Mussolini. The Italian government has established a "day of memory" each year and Italian state television produced a movie titled "The Heart in a Pit." Among those whose families that escaped the Communist terror was culinary master Lidia Matticchio Bastianich.

[Istria was part of Italy during Roman times and during the



Venetian Empire. It was again reunited after the First World War but lost after the Second.]

THE AGONY OF THE MISERLY

Each year, it seems, another Italian icon must be cut down to size. Julius Caesar has been vilified by some historians as an ethnic cleanser for his conquest of Gaul. Columbus has been branded with every crime inflicted on Native Americans. So now it is the turn of Michelangelo Buonarroti, genius of *il Rinascimento*. According to Professor Rab Hatfield of Syracuse University, the man who sculpted the *Pieta* and painted the Sistine Chapel was a shameless miser.

At his death, Michelangelo had little furniture, no books and no jewels but did have bank accounts (Italians invented banking) and deeds worth about 50,000 gold ducats. (As a measure of this wealth, the Pitti Palace in Florence sold for 9,000 ducats at the time.) Michelangelo was able to accrue such wealth for a number of reasons: his exceptional talent, his prolific workload, his spartan living and a lifespan that reached 89 years. Although he helped his extended family and paid his assistants well, perhaps the old genius preferred to project the image of a poor artist to ward off treasure seekers. But in all fairness, maybe he was just saving for his retirement.



THE THOUGHT COUNTS

Dr. Edward de Bono is a thinker, literally. He developed the concept of Lateral Thinking back in the 1960s and even had a popular BBC program that entertained and taught millions of Brits his method for being creative.



A Malta-born Brit with a medical degree, de Bono has written 68 books on the subject of thinking translated into 40 languages. The Indian government has asked him to set up training sessions in 50,000 schools and the Chinese have begun a pilot project for their school system. What exactly is Lateral Thinking? A perfect example was Columbus' idea of sailing west to find China. Most of us still think "vertically," following convention and just digging the same hole deeper.



RAGS TO NOBEL

Medical researcher Mario Capecchi is a half a million dollars richer and acclaimed by the Nobel Prize committee for his work in gene technology. Working with a pair of British scientists, who also won Nobel Prizes, the team successfully manipulated mouse genes to unlock the mysteries of a host of human diseases. Prior to coming to America at age 9, the Italian immigrant lived a destitute

life during the Second World War. When he was 3, his mother was arrested by the Gestapo and sent to Dachau as a political prisoner. First, he lived with a peasant family then survived on the streets, eventually ending up in a hospital with malnutrition. His mother survived internment and they were reunited on his ninth birthday and emigrated to America. The 70-year old Capecchi is affiliated with the University of Utah.

IS ITALY SERIOUS?

Italians seem to relish shocking the world with a can-you-top-this lousy image. How else do you explain headlines in the global press such as "In Italy, Cocaine Users Sign Up for Free Nose Jobs," or, "Organized Crime Takes Lead in Italian Economy?" Italians, it seems, confine their legendary *bella figura* to how they dress and what they serve guests. In the case of the crime report, it was issued by an association of small businesses, not the government or even a university. The report claims that 7% of the Italian economy (\$127 billion) the largest sector of the Italian economy, derives from extortion, usury, contraband, robberies, gambling and Internet piracy, mainly in four southern Italian regions. In Palermo, a crime prosecutor says, 80% of the businesses pay protection money. Not the stuff to encourage investment. Then, there is a new book exposing Naples' infamous *Camorra*. The author claims this octopus runs literally everything in southern Italy. Well, everything except the docks in Naples. They are under the control of the Chinese mob. Go figure. If that weren't enough, the big hit of the television season was a six-parter on the life of a former Mafia don. Italy sounds worse than Iraq these days.

This image sure doesn't match Italy's pretensions to global leadership. Despite its membership in the G-8, Italy is excluded from the Iran Contact Group, an exclusive club consisting of the U.S., Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany, formed to control Iran's budding nuclear activities. No matter that Italy is Iran's biggest trading partner. Somebody at Palazzo Chigi ought to connect some dots.

AMERICAN WEALTH

Few can argue that Italian Americans haven't succeeded economically. Among the Forbes List of richest people there are eleven billionaires of Italian stock. Here is how they arrived:

Jerrold Perenchio (\$3.1B)...Spanish language TV (Univision)

Daniel D'Aniello (\$2.5B)...leveraged buyouts

James Leprino (\$2.1B)...cheese

Thomas Golisano (\$2B)...Paychex payroll services

Edward DeBartolo Jr. (\$1.8B)...shopping centers

Fred DeLuca (\$1.6B)...Subway sandwiches

Thomas Marsico (\$1.5B)...mutual funds

Leandro Rizzuto (\$1.4B)...Conair hair dryers

Stephen Bisciotti (\$1.3B)...outsourcing football

Frank Fertitta (\$1.3B) casinos, Ultimate Fighting

Lorenzo Fertitta (\$1.3B) casinos, Ultimate Fighting



Jerrold Perenchio made his fortune in Spanish language media. Capisce?



Editorials

WHAT AMERICA NEEDS

Though many Americans, Italian surnamed or otherwise, still lament former New York governor Mario Cuomo's last-minute nixing of a Presidential bid in the early 90s, we tend to forget another inspirational figure who also had a date with destiny: Lee Iacocca, the brilliant businessman who saved the Chrysler Corporation from bankruptcy. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Iacocca was urged to run for the White House by party bosses as well as the common folk, an idea he seriously considered before ultimately declining. Now 82 years young, Iacocca has come out of retirement with a vengeance with his new bestseller, *Where Have All The Leaders Gone?* In the book, Iacocca excoriates the Bush administration, derides the U.S. Congress for "sitting on their asses" and laments the gradual erosion of America's moral and economic authority in the world. From Cicero to the late U.S. Senator John Pastore (D-RI), the Italic people have never lacked for eloquent leaders. Is it too late for an "Iacocca for President" independent bid in 2008? The former car executive apparently still has energy to burn.

Bill Dal Cerro, Vice President

PAX ITALICA: A Call to Self-Assertion

While the world anxiously awaits the long-term outcome of the Annapolis Middle East peace conference, Washington ought to consult Rome for tips on being an honest broker—and a bold peacemaker.

Though peacekeeping in the Levant is as treacherous as the shifting desert sands, Italy has a track record second to none in the region. In Afghanistan, NATO's Italian forces have acquitted themselves with honor and distinction. And not just on the battlefield.

According to senior cleric Maulvi Shirin Agha: "The Italians behave very well with the people, and everyone likes them. The Taliban can only dream of coming back."

During last year's ruinous war between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon, *il bel Paese* acted decisively to provide a solid framework for resolving the crisis.

Unlike the timorous French, the Italians combined deft diplomacy with a muscular troop commitment to forge an international contingent capable of disarming Hezbollah and safeguarding Israel's security. In fact, Ehud Olmert (Israel's prime minister) specifically requested that Italy assume command of the mission.

Prime Minister Romano Prodi and Foreign Minister Massimo D'Alema are to be commended for their perspicacity. Yet Prodi is still fuming—and rightfully so—that Italy has been excluded from the official contact group (the Five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council plus Germany) negotiating with Iran over nuclear arms: "I am not happy about that. You must include countries that have the greatest interest in the problem at hand. Italy is Iran's biggest European trading partner."

Romano Prodi—who served as an economics professor at the University of Bologna—is also a keen student of history. He knows that peacemaking is hardly *terra incognita* to the Italians—from antiquity to the present day. Indeed, the Middle East is the Magic Boot's backyard. Pick a city, nation or locale—Palestine, Jerusalem, Caesarea, Tiberias, Tehran, Beirut, Istanbul, Jordan, Baghdad, Damascus—and you'll find an Roman-Italian imprint.

In 1983, Italy fielded the most respected and effective peacekeepers in war-torn Lebanon, providing stability and succor to the refugees of Sabra and Shatila. And Beirut was once home to Italian expatriates during the reign of the Emperor Hadrian.

When Italy officially took charge of the multinational force in Lebanon in February 2007, it marked a return to Rome's primacy in the Mediterranean—and a long overdue call to global self-assertion.

Rosario A. Iaconis, Vice Chairman, East

CHARITIES & FOUNDATIONS

One of the more disturbing articles you will find in this issue deals with how the major Italian Americans spend their money. Because they are charitable foundations the public has open access to their tax returns, merely google "990 finder." You will see that a significant portion of organizational income is distributed as scholarships or large donations to medical charities. While there is no question of the good intentions and transparency of these gifts a suggestion could be raised as to the relevancy of allocating the lion's share of the community's resources to non-heritage programs. Helping an 18-year old pay for a fraction of his college education is not the same as protecting his Italian legacy. Similarly, you would be hard-pressed to demonstrate how giving to Boys Town of Italy relates to our cultural challenges here in the USA. In fact, there are few Italian "boys" at Boy's Town. The majority come from North Africa and Eastern Europe to Rome where they are integrated into Italian society. Meanwhile our Italian American boys and girls are growing up with only the Hollywood version of what being "Italian" means. These kids need acculturation not accounting credits.

Nor are medical charities relevant to our mission. Frankly, the overhead of most medical charities would shock many people. Their 990s can be googled to discover how little money actually trickles down to research and how much goes to executive salaries.

The Italic Institute spends 86% of its income on our own heritage programs like *Aurora Youth*, *Project Italia Productions* and *The Italic Way Magazine*. We have no paid executives and we don't give money away just to feel good. Our first and last mission is to the Italian heritage. It would be nice to have help.

John Mancini, Chairman



Forum of the People



[Editor's Note: The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith has recently established The Giovanni Palatucci Award. Its first recipient, David Cohen, was honored for his anti-terrorist efforts while serving with the New York Police Dept.]

A Brief Biography of Giovanni Palatucci

(1909 – 1945)



On May 31, 1909, Giovanni Palatucci was born in Montella, Italy, located in the region of Campagna, near Naples in southern Italy. By the age of 23, he graduated from the University of Turin with a degree in law. He practiced as an attorney for four years until 1936, when he qualified to be an inspector for the Italian Ministry of Public Administration. After working at the Genoa Police Station for one year, Giovanni Palatucci was transferred to Fiume in 1937, located near Trieste, where he was put in charge of the Office of Foreigners. Only one year later, he was named Chief of Police of Fiume, one of the major port cities located on the northern Adriatic Sea. At the time, Fiume was part of Italy; today, the city is officially located in Croatia, and goes by the Croatian name Rijeka. In 1938, the same year that Giovanni Palatucci was named Fiume's Chief of Police, Italy passed a number of anti-Semitic laws under pressure by the Nazi government of Germany, including the detainment of Jewish people in internment camps established across Italy. It was at this time that Palatucci decided to begin helping the Jewish people of Fiume by "officially" deporting them to internment camps near Rome, where he had family members who could ensure the safety and well-being of the Jewish deportees. His uncle, Giuseppe Palatucci, was Bishop of Campagna, and his other uncle, Alfonso

Palatucci, was the Provincial of the Franciscan Order in Puglia, located along the Adriatic Sea just north of Bari. Giovanni Palatucci called on both his uncles to protect and watch over the Jewish deportees, and said in response to the Nazi laws, "They want to make us believe that the heart is just a muscle, to prevent us from doing what our hearts and faith tell us to do."

In 1939, nearly 800 Jewish refugees set sail for Palestine, trying to escape the impending tyranny of the Nazis in Germany and Eastern Europe (i.e., Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland). Being a major port city along the Adriatic Sea, the ship had to pass through Fiume, Italy in order to reach Palestine. Nazi collaborators were plotting to stop the ship and send all the passengers back to Germany, but Giovanni Palatucci managed to alert the passengers in time, and as a result the ship landed safely in southern Italy before the Nazi collaborators could capture the passengers.

By 1940, Italy officially joined World War II on the side of the Germans. From 1940 to



Palatucci (seated) with his Fiume staff

1944, Giovanni Palatucci did everything he could to save the lives of Jewish people. He issued false identity papers and visas, delivered food and money to those who were in hiding, gave warnings when the Nazis were planning a "Jew hunt," and sent as many Jews as possible to the internment camps in Campagna and Puglia. By the end of the war, the internment camp in Campagna was one of the largest in all of Europe.

In late 1943, the Germans became dangerously suspicious of Palatucci when he was not able to provide them with a list of all Jewish residents residing in Fiume. Most of the files had been destroyed, and those remaining in Palatucci's office were of Jewish families that had been documented as having long emigrated from Italy. Knowing the danger that faced Giovanni Palatucci, his close friend, the Swiss ambassador to Trieste, offered him an exit visa to Switzerland. Palatucci accepted the visa, but gave it to his then recent fiancée who was Jewish rather than using it for himself. She survived the war and lived in Israel until her death (date unknown).

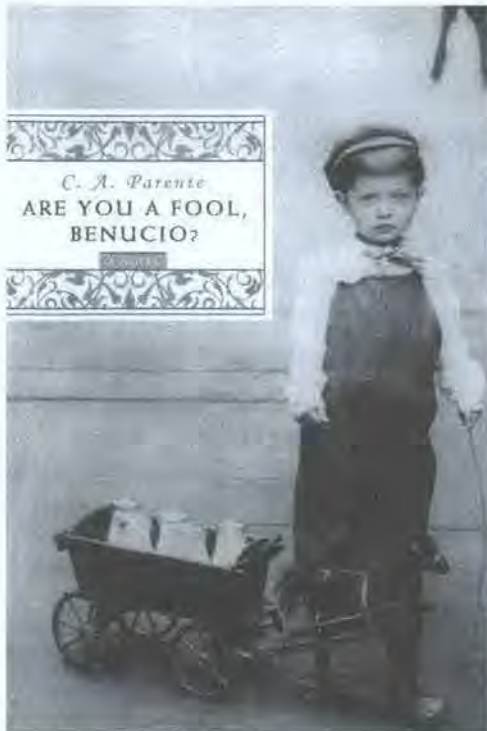
Only days later, Giovanni Palatucci was arrested by the Gestapo (German security police) on September 13, 1944. He was charged with treason and conspiracy, and was sentenced to death. However, due to the plea of his friend, the Swiss consul, his sentence was commuted to exile at Dachau, a concentration camp located in Munich, Germany. He was transferred to Dachau on October 22, 1944. His prison number was 117.826.

On February 10, 1945, Giovanni Palatucci died in Dachau, just ten weeks before the camp was liberated. Some say he died of malnutrition, others have testified that he was shot. ****

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A Heritage Novel



Spanning four generations, *Are You a Fool, Benucio?*, vividly portrays the Viscounti family's struggle to overcome racial bias, the Great Depression, and gang mentality as they try to remain true to their Italian roots and pursue the American dream.

This book may be purchased online from Barnes & Noble, Amazon and iUniverse.com. The hard cover list price is \$29.95 and the paperback at \$19.95. Barnes & Noble's online price is \$23.95 and \$17.95.



Zinni, from p. 11

Zinni: If you look at the Mediterranean, historically, Italy is the cradle of that region. If you go back to Imperial Rome and the Italian city-states of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, Italy always has been central, or core, to the development, history, and cultural evolution of Mediterranean society.

I think now Italy is seen in a positive light, that it tends not to have enemies. Italians seem to be able to work with all of the nations in the Mediterranean basin in a positive way. They're not suspected of having imperial designs and they present a much more acceptable solution to some problems, particularly when you get into humanitarian and peacekeeping. It's easier for nations like Italy, but also the Nordic countries, Norway, Sweden, even Canada, to be involved in these things and not be suspect to political motivation or imperial designs than, say, the United States, United Kingdom or Russia.

A perfect example was back in the 1980s during the Lebanese civil war and the Beirut bombings. The British, the French, and the U.S. peacekeepers were all hit. The Italian garrison wasn't attacked. That's because of the way the Italians were perceived by the Lebanese factions. They weren't perceived as taking sides or having an agenda.

IIA: You have referred often to Imperial Rome as part of the Italian legacy. Yet, Rome seems to get the same negative media as Italy and Italian Americans. The recent HBO series Rome comes to mind. Have you seen it?

Zinni: Yes. I saw the Rome series. I agree, but negative image is what sells. If they had emphasized law and architecture and all the other positive contributions instead of butchery the show wouldn't have been a popular HBO series. It had to be the blood, the guts, the lust, and everything else that is Hollywood.

The other thing I notice about movies that are made about Rome is that Brits always play the Romans. Even in the past. Rex Harrison as Caesar, Peter Ustinov as Nero, or Russell Crowe as *The Gladiator*. It's always Brits who play Romans. If you're going to portray empire you have to portray this British, pompous kind of view. In reality the Romans were probably much less pompous, more laid-back and more Italian.

IIA: How important is it for Italian-American students to have a greater appreciation for their classical Roman and Italian roots?

Zinni: It's very important. You probably can't find another society on earth that has as rich a history and cultural development as Italy. We know about Rome, the Papacy, and the Renaissance but there is so much more.

Even if you take away these huge accomplishments, Italy's richness in lesser accomplishments would, no doubt, still far outweigh other societies. And I don't think there is an appreciation for that, certainly not. And I think that Italian-Americans need to try and preserve that and emphasize it. Our country, America, and our capital, District of Columbia, are named after Italians.

We don't talk enough about how widespread Italian American contributions are in every

Cont'd on page 12



GENERAL TONY ZINNI Warrior-Statesman

An interview with *The Italic Way* reporter Anthony Vecchione on December 3, 2007

Bio: Pennsylvania-born Anthony Zinni is a retired 4-star U.S. Marine general. A graduate of Villanova University, his career began as a second lieutenant in 1965. Wounded during his second tour in Vietnam, Zinni went on to serve our nation in various military capacities culminating as Commander-in-Chief, Central Command (Middle East) during the late 1990s. General Zinni's special skills in dealing with diverse cultures have made him invaluable to the nation in such tinderboxes as Somalia, Iraq and the Kurdish provinces. In 2000 President George W. Bush appointed him as special emissary in the Israel-Palestinian dispute.

General Zinni is well-versed in global history and takes special pride in his Italian heritage. He was honored by the Italic Institute in 1998, receiving its Silver Medallion Award.



The Institute's 1998 Awards Gala. Gen. Zinni is seated at the center. Italian Admiral Venturoni is seated to his left. Others shown are NY Supreme Court Justice Dominic Massaro, standing extreme left; IIA Chairman John Mancini, standing behind Gen. Zinni, and IIA Vice Chairman Rosario Iaconis, standing extreme right.

IIA: General Zinni, do you think the English-speaking media conveys an accurate image of Italy and the Italians?

Zinni: There is a popular image of the Italian character that Italians are much more laid-back, that they enjoy life more, that they are maybe not as serious about their governance and other issues as others might be.

But in a way, even though that may be exaggerated, it isn't negative; it's almost envious in a way that they seem to get more out of life. Some of the things that we take so seriously they take with more of a grain of salt. They function. They can live well and get things done, but they can do it in a way that emphasizes their zest for life. Their appreciation for life is much greater.

When you look at the history of Italy you can understand why it has evolved that way. It's been through a period of empire, a period of art and the development of capitalism, scholarship and sci-

ence. It's gone through evolutions that very few, if any, other cultures have ever gone through. They have had so many impressive and important eras in their development.

IIA: The U.S. media often portrays Italy as somewhat chaotic and crime-ridden. How do you see it?

Zinni: I just spent three weeks in Tuscany and I went with three other couples. None of the other couples were Italian American. They just loved it. Italy functions. It functions well. It's beautiful and it allows you to enjoy and appreciate life much more, every aspect of it.

I think you can attribute that to Italian cultural evolution and development. Italians have arrived at a point that maybe others have not. Maybe some other societies have had their moment of empire or their moment of art, but Italy has done them all. That kind of so many great eras is unique to Italy. Maybe it has led to this great appreciation of life, just because their accomplishments have been so great.

IIA: The U.S. relationship with Italy doesn't seem to be as close as it is with other European countries like Britain, France and Germany. Has that been your experience?

Zinni: I think on the ground certainly it is a good relationship. From my experience our government has always had a strong relationship with Italy. I've been with Italian forces in northern Iraq, Somalia and elsewhere and it was always an easy relationship to develop, to maintain, to coordinate and to cooperate within.

IIA: Has the fact that Italy has had so many governments, post-World War Two, influenced its relationship with the U.S.?

Zinni: It has something to do with it, but I don't want to exaggerate that. I don't think I've seen where that's had an influence in shaping a view of our opinion of the Italians in any way.

I had friends that served in NATO when Admiral Venturoni was up there heading NATO. They loved him. They thought he was one of the most brilliant of the NATO leaders. I think within the NATO context there's great respect and appreciation for the Italian contributions, I don't only mean in a military context but in a political context, too.

IIA: What should be Italy's role in the Mediterranean and the Middle East?



field of endeavor in positive areas. That gets lost in the sensationalism. The negative aspects get the emphasis.

IIA: It seems to be a challenge for Italian-Americans to get an accurate sense of their classical roots. Do you have any theories as to why?

Zinni: I have a personal gripe. My Irish buddies can go to the history of their county and find out about their ancestors. My parents are from Abruzzi and when I try to read about the history of Abruzzi I can't find anything on it. If you buy a book on Italian history it's about Rome, the Papacy, and Renaissance. There's nothing wrong with that, but there isn't the next level down, the texture. There are 20 regions in Italy. They are all unique and diverse, have their own history and culture, and it's hard to get an appreciation for that.

Rome was one piece of Italy, even during the Empire. What about the other Italian cities and regions at that time? We don't know much about the other parts of ancient Italy. Even today, people see Italy as one big homogeneous, monolithic entity. I have friends who don't quite understand when I talk about the region my parents are from and how different that is from the common image of Italy. When two Italians meet, the first thing they ask each other is what region are you from? That's how they relate.

IIA: What is your opinion of Italian-American artists, filmmakers,

writers, who perpetuate negative images and stereotypes and make a lot of money doing it?

Zinni: I think that they have to be held accountable especially if they are enriching themselves from those negative images. We have a whole number of Italian-American stereotypes and many of these artists prosper from them. Unfortunately, many Italian-Americans play into that; in effect, they are supporting it.

IIA: Did you ever personally encounter prejudice for being an Italian-American?

Zinni: I have never experienced any prejudice toward me for being an Italian-American. I came into a military where the leadership was southern and white and it has evolved so much differently. Nevertheless, I was encouraged by senior officers who were culturally different

than me. Never did my ethnic background, in any way, hurt me.

IIA: What would you advise Italian-Americans to do if they experience prejudice or stereotyping at work, or in a social setting?

Zinni: I would call the offending person on it, using humor or something else, but I wouldn't let it go. It's important to demonstrate that you are sensitive to it, that you don't just let it roll off your back.

Unfortunately I think that there are lots of Italian-Americans who like that kind of negative stereotyping. It's an

(Cont'd on p. 32)

“[Our success] came on the backs of our parents and others...”



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ARE WE THERE YET?

Defining Success

It's a banner year for Americans of Italian heritage. Regardless of your political persuasion you cannot help but be proud that children of Italy have passed the gauntlet of American politics to assume national leadership. As we write, the Speaker of the House of Representatives is Nancy Pelosi. Antonin Scalia and Samuel Alito sit on the Supreme Court, the recently retired Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff were Gen. Peter Pace and Adm. Edmund Giambastiani, Italian Americans are governors of Arizona (Janet Napolitano), Rhode Island (Donald Carcieri), Maine (John Baldacci) and West Virginia (Joe Manchin). To top it off, Rudolph Giuliani almost made the short list for President of the United States. That's clearly an A+ for assimilation.

But before we celebrate let's ponder the meaning of this success. Unquestionably, having two justices on the Supreme Court, and one of our own third in line to be president is a winning situation. Whether this tide of success will lift all of our boats, i.e., generate some powerful Italian American networking, remains to be seen. At the very least, we now have more impressive role models for our children and grandchildren.

For those of you with gray hair you may recall how we shared the same elation some decades ago when people named Joseph Alioto, Mario Cuomo and Geraldine Ferraro were flirting with high



U.S. Representatives Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) and Bill Pascrell (D-NJ) were the only two national politicians who helped the Italian American Community during the *Shark Tale* controversy. *Shark Tale* was the first animated mafia movie for children.

national office. Those were the days of open ethnic pride and Italian American voting blocs. Even the *New York Times* took notice with a magazine story about Italian Americans "Coming into Their Own." But they were also the

days of open bigotry, when ABC-TV's national correspondent Sam Donaldson could blatantly call for mafia investigations on all Italian American candidates. It was a time when rumors of Mafia connections dogged the most honorable of our candidates. Today's roster of Italian American political leaders is impressive but we must share that euphoria with other groups. Something encouraging has happened in America over the last decade. Perhaps because of globalization or perhaps because American voters are getting used to variety, ethnicity and color are no longer the barriers to success they used to be. Granted, some fields like academia and the media still retain some exclusivity, but public office has

grown very inclusive. Italian Americans are riding the same wave that has propelled men like Senator Joseph Lieberman, a Jew who ran for U.S. Vice President in 2000. This is the same wave that now has a woman and an African American vying for president. It seems that all the barriers have fallen. So, our success must be put into perspective.

An interesting comparison could be made with Jewish Americans. Although they number only six million citizens versus our sixteen million, they have achieved spectacular success in the electoral process. There are thirteen (13) Jewish United States Senators, twenty-nine (29) members of the House and three (3) governors. There are also two Jewish Supreme Court justices. Italian-surnamed politicians count for only two (2) U.S. Senators and fourteen (14) Representatives. [Back in 1983, Italian-surnames accounted for three (3) Senators and twenty-four (24) Representatives. There were also four (4) Italian-surnamed governors at that time.] Clearly, the progress of Jewish Americans outshines ours.

African Americans have also made impressive strides. Besides having thirty-five (35) members of Congress they have filled the positions of Secretary of State, National Security Advisor, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and have a major presidential candidate for 2008. Greek

Americans, with a population of one-twentieth of ours, have had a U.S. Vice President (Agnew), three senators, a state governor, two presidential candidates (Dukakis, Tsongas) and a CIA director. There have been Asians in the highest military positions, cabinet offices and state governorships. An Asian Indian American was just elected the first non-white governor of Louisiana since Reconstruction. In short, there has been a demonstrable change in political opportunity in America.

But numbers alone do not necessarily reflect the power of a community. Another measure of ethnic success is how far political influence trickles down to the community. Will more Italian Americans be appointed to important positions, i.e., Cabinet posts, ambassadorships, etc.? Will special grants be given for our cultural preservation? Will the Italian Republic gain greater benefits in trade or international affairs? Will the United States share

The consensus is that we no longer have any issues as an ethnic group



National Scottish Tartan Day at the Capitol with Senator Trent Lott (R-MS), left, and other proud Scottish American politicians. What does "assimilation" really mean?



Italy's costly burden of preserving Western Civilization's artistic and architectural legacy? And finally, will media defamation against Italian Americans be set right? If none of the above, then what exactly do we gain from our political success? Are we to be satisfied with mere role models? Few other groups have achieved political power and not reaped the benefits down the line.

As Americans we should welcome leaders who show no favoritism to their own kind. We should praise those who can treat their ancestral homeland as just another foreign country. But it would appear that among the only leaders who have displayed these traits are Italian American politicians. The special relationship with the United Kingdom is still a set piece in American foreign policy born of Anglo-Saxon ties. Sub-Saharan Africa has become the cause of many African American leaders. Israel is almost our 51st state. Even Greek American politicians monitor our policies in the Aegean to keep Turkey in line. The Spanish language is our unofficial second tongue. Asian groups have become effective lobbyists for their communities and two Japanese American legislators were able to obtain over \$1 billion in reparations for their constituents interned during the Second World War. Even Irish American politicians are disposed to help Ireland and thousands of illegal Irish immigrants. Italian American politicians do not have these sorts of demands from our community.

Perhaps the reason for this is a general belief that we have no



House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) is a strong advocate for Israel. Her Jewish grandchildren are also a link to that community.

pressing needs as an ethnic group. Have you ever heard of "Italian American poor" or "Italy must have secure borders?" Our neighborhoods are not crime-ridden or deteriorating. Our children are not a social problem. Italian immigrants are not flooding our shores. Our culture is not impeding our assimilation. Our problems are nothing that America needs to fix. But we do have problems. And some of us do have a vision of what the Italian heritage should be.

Preserving the tattered remnants of our patrimony, which is now left to movie studios, is a serious issue for some Italian Americans. That patrimony differs from 90% of the other ethnic groups. The Italian heritage includes classical Rome, the Renaissance and a history in America and throughout the world second to none. Giving all of that up in the name of assimilation is not an even trade. Neither Greek Americans nor Jewish Americans have abandoned their ancient legacies as readily as Italian Americans. Greek and Jewish politicians still cling to their communities in recognition of their common struggles and immense accomplishments. Can the same be said of our politicians?

A couple of years ago actor Sean Connery hosted a ceremony on the U.S. Capitol steps celebrating the Scottish National Tartan Day. Senator Trent Lott of Mississippi and other high-ranking government officials attended, wearing kilts. Who would have thought that

Our patrimony differs from 90% of the other ethnic groups.

a good ole boy from the Deep South still considers himself a Scotsman and not be embarrassed to look ethnic?

In 2004, a veteran named Jim Webb published a book and was given the cover of *Parade Magazine* for his homage to the Scots-Irish. Today, it's Senator Jim Webb of North Carolina. Senator Webb believes that his folk have an image problem in Hollywood ("rednecks and hillbillies") and he is out to change it.

When a united Italian American community appealed to its national legislators for help in negotiating with Hollywood over the animated children's movie *Shark Tale*, with its gratuitous Italian-surnamed mafia sharks, only two lone Congress members, Bill Pascrell (D-NJ) and Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), stood up to be counted. All the others turned a deaf ear. If writing a simple letter of support during the *Shark Tale* controversy was beyond their commitment to our community, what more can we expect?

And a word must be said about Congressman Tom Tancredo. During his brief run for U.S. president in 2007 he publicly defended a Colorado restaurant that served "Wop Burgers." He is very much

against "political correctness," starting with his own kind. As the French say, "He missed a good opportunity to remain silent."

Italian Americans are probably the only ethnic group in America that actually plays the assimilation game according to the rules. In 1996, without a Congressional vote, Jewish Senators Barbara Boxer and Arlen Specter gave filmmaker Steven Spielberg \$1 million from the U.S. Libraries Budget for his Holocaust project. The unprecedented raid into our national treasury was rationalized with the proviso that the action was a one-time deal not to be repeated by any other senators. That is "trickle down" with a vengeance!

One of the more telling examples of assertive minorities is the Indian American lobby. They not only recently managed to lobby Congress to give India special nuclear privileges, but persuaded Italian American congressman Frank Pallone (D-NJ) to co-found the new Caucus on India.

It is no mystery that all office holders respond favorably to campaign donations or voting blocs. That's the way the political system works. As it happens, there are no meaningful Italian American PACs (Political Action Committees) to donate money, nor are there many voting blocs. Italian American allegiance is probably evenly divided between the two parties. Some Italian American groups occasionally communicate with the so-called Italian American Caucus in Congress. This Caucus, which also includes a number of non-Italic legislators that have a high percentage of Italian American constituents, has supported such legislation as Resolution 2442, calling for an inquiry into the persecution of Italian Americans by the U.S. government during the Second World War. But, by and large, it is a ceremonial association.

All this boils down to one reality: Italian Americans reaching positions of political power cont'd on p. 22



Rep. Tom Tancredo (R-CO), a member of the Italian American Caucus, defends the "Wop Burger"



THE GREAT FIRE OF ROME: Ancient Terrorism?

[Editor: This article was prompted by a History Channel episode called "The Great Fire of Rome" that offered a new culprit, the Christians, for that ancient cataclysm during the reign of Emperor Nero. Previously, the culprit was assumed to be Nero himself. Since the gates of revisionism have now swung open, we cite another theory first published by ancient Rome scholar Michael Grant in his book "The Jews of Rome" which suggests that fellow Judeans clearly benefitted from the blaming of Judeo-Christians.]



By Alfred Cardone

Who has not heard the old tale that Nero fiddled while Rome burned? This portrayal of Nero as an incendiary who burned the great city of Rome is consistent with his reputation as a cruel and mad tyrant. In order to deflect public outrage, Nero is said to have blamed the Christians for this crime of arson and the great fire that ensued. After convincing the Roman populace of their guilt, Nero then launched a terrible persecution of the Christians. This has been the generally

accepted version of the history of these events. Recent academic inquiry, however, is lending support to Nero's accusation against the Christians. Nevertheless, these same scholars and the noted British expert on Roman history, Michael Grant, acknowledge that others may have had a motive.

Among the diverse ethnic and religious groups that dwelled in Rome were the Jews whose community in the capital already existed at the time of Julius Caesar. In fact, Caesar granted the Jews certain privileges, which were subsequently confirmed by a vote of the Senate. By the time of the Great Fire on the night of July 18th/19th in the year 64 AD, a community of early Christians had also settled in Rome. The hatred and animosity between the Jews and early Christians that had started in Judea gradually spread to every part of the Empire in which these two groups came into contact. The city of Rome was no exception.

We have only to read today's headlines to realize that religious strife is a basic human pastime. Shiites and Sunnis destroy each other in the name of the same Allah. Catholics and Protestants, Christians and Muslims, as well as Hindus and Muslims, have slaughtered each other for centuries. Neither Jew nor Christian today could deny that relations between the two have been problematic and often murderous. Jews often take the moral high ground in this relationship. Yet, their own history paints a different picture of their religious zealotry. Moses, for example, liquidated 3,000 dissident Hebrews at Mt. Sinai (Exodus 32:28). The leaders of the Jewish establishment, the Sanhedrin, in the 1st Century AD Roman Empire viewed Judeo-Christians as blasphemers who worshipped a false Messiah and divided Yahweh into three parts.

Jesus of Nazareth paid the ultimate price for challenging these elders.

Persecution of Christians by Jewish leaders continued after the death of Jesus. Apostles Peter and John were both imprisoned on more than one occasion by the Sanhedrin and flogged before being released. Stephen became the first Christian martyr when he was stoned to death by members of the Sanhedrin. This ushered in a major persecution which included James, the brother of Jesus, who was also ordered stoned to death by the Sanhedrin under the leadership of the high priest Ananus in the year 62 AD while the Roman pro-consul was out of the province.

Judeo-Christians and traditional Jews worshipped at the same synagogues in Rome, much to the consternation of Jews. It would be tantamount to Mormons invading a Catholic church. In 49 AD, a missionary seems to have appeared in Rome presenting himself as the returned Christ and preaching that the day of the Lord was imminent. Since the Romans at this time made no distinction between Jews and Christians, both groups were expelled from the city by an edict of the Emperor Claudius in order to quell this agitation.

As stated by Suetonius in his "Impulsore Chresto" passage, "Since the Jews constantly made disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus, he (Claudius) expelled them from Rome".

Many of these Jews soon returned to Rome, no doubt harboring a lasting hatred of the Christians in their midst whom they viewed as dangerous heretics likely to provoke renewed

Roman anger and repression. The local Jewish authorities perhaps feared that if they could not bring these volatile Christians under control, there was a very real possibility of more Roman intervention. The Jews of Rome, one would reasonably assume, made every effort to isolate and distinguish themselves from these followers of Jesus. Isolation was one thing, but was the ultimate goal the elimination of these early Christians?

Whether the Great Fire of Rome was an accident or was deliberately set by the Christians to hasten the "end times" when Jesus would return to earth, or by Emperor Nero to clear away old neighborhoods, are the usual choices offered by historians. However, a fourth cause was possible: Judean terrorists, Zealots, who wanted to destroy the Roman Empire for occupying their homeland. Not a year went by that Zealots and Romans did not come to blows perhaps over some slight or real injustice. Zealots often worked with the Judean Sicarii (dagger men) who regularly assassinated moderate Jews to keep their fanaticism on track. Josephus says of the Zealots, "...they copied every evil deed, nor was there any villainy recorded in history that they failed to emulate zealously." [War 7:268-70] One group of Zealots, the

(Cont'd on p. 16)

***One group of Zealots,
the Zadokites,
carried on their hatred
of Rome from Egypt.***



Zadokites, carried on their hatred of Rome from Egypt. There they learned of an ancient Egyptian prophecy based on the Dog Star (Sirius) that rises on July 19th marking the annual flooding of the Nile. (The expression "dog days" of summer evolved from this.) The Zealots embraced a then-current belief that a great Western city, presumably Rome, would be destroyed when the Dog Star appeared. This was the very date the Great Fire began.

As luck would have it, the fire that began, or was started, on the night of July 18th/19th 64 AD grew into a major conflagration consuming ten of the fourteen districts of Rome. Dry weather and the right winds can explain how the fire spread, but there were reports that the fire was controlled a number of times only to restart again. The Jewish quarter, however, on the opposite side of the Tiber River, was never in danger.

The next interesting twist is that rather than blame ill fortune or the Jewish community for the fire, Nero directed his wrath at the Judeo-Christians. Unlike his predecessor Emperor Claudius, Nero knew the difference between Christians and Jews. Why? Because we learn from Jewish historian Josephus that Nero's wife, Poppaea, was known to be an informal adherent of Judaism. (It was fashionable in Rome to embrace Oriental religions.) She was therefore accessible to Jewish community leaders who, no doubt, briefed her on the false Messiah Jesus and the "end times." As we know, Nero did blame the Christians for the Great Fire and launched a terrible campaign of persecution against them in 64 AD. Peter was presumably martyred during this pogrom. (Christianity had now lost two leaders: James, brother of Jesus, and Peter. Paul was soon to follow.) The traditional Jewish community of Rome was spared from any persecution.

Much like the Catholic Inquisition against Protestantism centuries later, the Sanhedrin and the Zealots appeared to have conducted a very comprehensive war against early Christianity. That struggle dated from the machinations against Jesus in 33 AD and the harassment of his apostles, as detailed in the New Testament, to the execution of his brother James, head of the church in Judea, in 62 AD. Is it not then possible to contemplate a Zealot plot in 64 AD to destroy Rome and liquidate Peter and his budding church in the process? The Zealot steamroller may have continued into 66 AD when they instigated a full-blown rebellion in Judea. Ultimately, these ancient terrorists brought their nation to ruin. Perhaps the Italic legions that suppressed the rebellion wished to avenge the burning of Rome, for in 70 AD Jerusalem and Herod's great temple were burned and the spoils paraded in Rome. Much of the Jewish population was forced into exile. By 135 AD, after a second Zealot

rebellion under Emperor Hadrian, Rome had had enough, and the remaining Jews were sent into exile from which they only returned in 1948.

Was the Great Fire of Rome, if indeed an act of Judean terrorism, part of a larger plan to destroy Roman hegemony and wipe out Christianity? Did it unintentionally lead to the destruction of the Jewish state and the two-thousand-year Diaspora of the Jews?

[ED. *The Italic Way* contacted two of the scholars featured in the History Channel special on the Great Fire of Rome. Although they supported the theory of a Christian causation, here is what they said about a Judean causation:

Gerhard Baudy (University of Konstanz, Germany)—

"...Because of this painful experience (being expelled from Rome in 49 AD) the Roman Jews did everything to isolate themselves from the followers of Jesus Christ in the years thereafter. This strategy was successful as you can conclude from events after the great fire, when non-Christian Jews were spared from persecution. This we can easily explain in (Mr. Cardone's) way, supposing that Roman-loyal Jews delivered their revolutionary compatriots as well as "soldiers of Christ" of pagan origin, who saw themselves as 'the true Jews'... why after the great fire the Romans didn't blame the Jews, but only a special group, hitherto not separated from them, the Christians?"

Nicholas Purcell (St. John's College at Oxford, England)


—"Within this volatile and unstable world, both real terrorist activity and a very active politics of loyalty, treachery, competition, and ever-changing relations to the ruling power (of the sort that Mr. Cardone proposes) seem to me to be very likely. The fire and its aftermath shed a bit of light on this world, if Baudy is right about the 19th July, but it is only a small ray lighting up a large, labyrinthine, and very shadowy place."

ED: A word on the Jewish historian Flavius Joseph is appropriate here. Many modern Jewish scholars dismiss Josephus as a turncoat who betrayed his people during the first Jewish War against the Romans. Josephus fought the Romans at first but later felt that the war was suicidal and served only the purposes of the Zealots. Notwithstanding this charge, Josephus was a prolific historian who documented the long history of his people. Cecil B. DeMille used Josephus' version of the events at Mt. Sinai in the epic "Ten Commandments." Defying the Torah, Josephus blamed the wrath of God rather than Moses for the murder of 3,000 Hebrews at Mt. Sinai. In this instance, Josephus was very protective of the Jewish image.] ****

Nero's wife, Poppaea, was known to be an informal adherent of Judaism



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GOING IT ALONE... ...AND SUCCEEDING!

By Louis Cornaro

Whoever said that there is strength in numbers hasn't dealt much with the Italian American community. Hyped as the fifth largest ethnic group in America with numbers varying between 16 million and 25 million souls, and hailing from a land that gave birth to the Roman Empire and the Renaissance, Italian American power is inversely proportional to its numbers. Its underlying pride revolves around cuisine and mafia movies, surely not the stuff of greatness. Meanwhile, numerically lesser groups such as Jewish, Greek and even Asian-Indians wield much greater influence in domestic politics and foreign affairs. Like Italy's old description as a "geographic expression," Italian Americans could be considered merely an ethnic expression.

But out of this unguided mass a certain spirit has manifested itself. Out of the predictable drone of an apathetic Italian community sprang men such as Giovanni Schiavo, John La Corte, and Generoso Pope. These individuals saw greatness where others saw glorified immigrant struggle. In some cases these individuals were businessmen tied to the community but mostly they were inspired men who understood the Italian past and were driven to reclaim it. It was their lonely efforts that laid the groundwork for an Italian American renaissance that still has yet to bloom.

A perfect example of dreams gone awry is the creation of the *Casa Italiana* at Columbia University in 1927, the first beachhead of



Justice Michael Musmanno exposed the Vinland Map

Italian academia in America. Columbia University donated the land and three Italian American builders, Joseph and Charles Paterno and Anthony Campagna, constructed the \$400,000 (1926 dollars!) building at no cost. Another New Yorker and former Judge, John J. Freschi, formed a committee to endow the *Casa* with \$1 million. Any organizations that were in existence at that time fol-

lowed the lead of these four founding individuals. What's become of the *Casa*? It still stands and was renovated in the 1980s with funds from the Italian Republic. However, the *Casa's* relation to the Italian American community that gave it birth is non-existent. It is literally an ivory tower of academic reflection, a destination for Italian scholars with an itch to travel. The current director is David Freedberg. None of the major Italian American organizations sits on its board.

It wasn't a university *casa* or chair in Italian studies or even a major organization that first gave the Italian American community its past. It was a sole individual named Giovanni Schiavo. His *Four*

Centuries of Italian American History was completed in 1952 after decades of research and travel. It is the Bible of Italic accomplishments in America. Schiavo devoted his life and treasure on this grand work. From Schiavo's work we discover, among many other facts, that Italic people signed the Declaration of Independence and helped to underwrite Jamestown. Schiavo, not the major organizations, showed us that America owes Italians and not the other



Justice John J. Freschi "The Father of Columbus Day"

*Our greatest progress
was made
by individuals.*

way around. A young immigrant himself, Schiavo wanted to prove that Italians didn't just come off the boat in 1900. He died somewhat bitter toward the major organizations that had never helped him. In one letter he stated, "Italian-American organizations didn't give me a plugged nickel." What else is new?

John LaCorte was a feisty insurance broker from Brooklyn who saw history as a means to unify the community. If Schiavo researched the facts, LaCorte did something with them. He observed correctly that second and third generation Italians identi-



Giovanni Schiavo spent a lifetime researching our accomplishments in America

fied their heritage as low class and uneducated. He dismissed the Sons of Italy as too superficial and non-cultural and founded his own Italian Historical Society of America in 1949. He fought for Italian American recognition, first for explorer Giovanni Verrazzano. It was LaCorte who convinced the government to name the world's longest suspension bridge in New York City after this Italian. Later, he lobbied the FBI to put a statue of its founder, Joseph Bonaparte, at the entrance of its building in Washington DC. In the 1980s, LaCorte pestered Bell Telephone and the media to acknowledge Antonio Meucci as the first inventor of the telephone. Ma Bell never did accept

the notion but they attended an unveiling ceremony for Meucci in a park across from their Brooklyn headquarters. (The New York State Sons of Italy maintains Meucci's home in Staten Island and continues the struggle to secure the inventor's fame as well as money to



maintain his home.)

While the various organizations publish newsletters and magazines for their membership, they have never ventured into the mass media. Once again, the community depended on a few individuals to keep alive the written word, men like Generoso Pope who founded the first Italian language daily *Il Progresso* back in 1880, founded the Columbus Citizens Foundation, and launched New York's Columbus Day Parade. His newspaper is still in business as *America Oggi*. Other Italian activists founded periodicals elsewhere: *l'Italo-Americano* in California, *Fra Noi* in Chicago and *The Italian Tribune* in New Jersey. Modest though they are, these periodicals are the last forums for community activism. Unfortunately, they often yield community leadership to the less imaginative groups that see these vital periodicals as mere billboards for their social events.

If it's initiative you want among Italian Americans, always look to the individual rather than the group. Such an example is the struggle to make Columbus Day a national holiday in 1934. From the pages of *Atlantica Magazine* (May, 1934) we are told how Colorado printer Angelo Noce, an immigrant from Genoa who arrived in America in 1850, lobbied his state officials for thirty years, finally winning recognition for his *paesano* Columbus in 1907. However, credit for achieving a national holiday was given to Judge John J. Freschi, the New Yorker who led the endowment effort at the *Casa Italiana*, noted above. His 28-year campaign was enough to earn Freschi the title "Father of Columbus Day." Among those listed in the campaign credits were the Columbus Day League, U.S. Senators Robert Wagner and Royal Copeland, U.S. Congressman James Fitzpatrick, Generoso Pope, and Judge Albert Vitale.

Nearer our own time, the dark days of the 1942 persecution of Italian Americans were revealed by a lone California civil service worker named Rose Scherini in the 1980s.. Scherini and author Lawrence DiStasi mounted a traveling exhibit that informed the national Italian American community of the degradation suffered at



Generoso Pope used his personal wealth to found *Il Progresso* newspaper, the Columbus Citizens Foundation, and launch the first Columbus Day parade

the hands of the Roosevelt Administration: 10,000 men, women and children forcibly evicted from their homes along the California coast, the internment of scores of Italian American community leaders, the confiscation of fishing boats and the loss of jobs and livelihoods. Four elderly men committed suicide rather than endure the disgrace and ruin. Aside from accommodating the traveling exhibit, the major organizations had no grand plans for it. Again, it was a lone filmmaker, John Kröllpfeiffer, whose Italian and German grandparents fell victims to the persecution, who appealed to the Italic Institute for funding of his documentary project after a major organization dismissed it. The Institute sought redress and funding from the U. S. Congress, to no avail. Despite the later lobbying of Congress by NIAF and other organizations, Italian Americans never received an apology or the funding to produce a documentary. The best they obtained was a joint resolution acknowledging the events of 1942. (Ironically, Italian Canadians, who also suffered in 1942, received both an apology from their Prime Minister and a government-funded documentary film of the events.)

There are plenty of examples of how our heritage is carried on the backs of a few self-sacrificing individuals who labor

without recognition or significant financial support from the major organizations. They are the unsung heroes of our community.* It was they, like the Italian copyists of the Middle Ages, who preserved our Italian and American legacies for future generations.

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

- Giovanni Schiavo



John LaCorte
A lone wolf who took on the FBI, Bell Telephone and the Verrazano Bridge

[* Just to name a few more: Richard Gambino, author of *Blood of My Blood* and *Vendetta*; Lee Iacocca, Statue of Liberty & Ellis Island Restorations; Geraldine Ferraro, first female candidate for U.S. Vice President; Richard Capozzola and Prof. Gaetano Cipolla, historical educational materials; Sister Margherita Marchione, books on colonist Filippo Mazzei; Lawrence DiStasi, author and researcher of the 1942 Internment; Judge Michael Musmanno, attorney for Sacco & Vanzetti and opponent of the forged Vinland Map that purported to prove earlier Viking journeys to America. ****

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WHAT GRAND STRATEGY?

Assimilation or Cultural Survival?

During a recent visit to Australia, NIAF's chairman Kenneth Ciongoli met with leaders of the Italian Australian community. They lamented the sad condition of their ethnic group Down Under: political unity eludes them, their children resist learning Italian and there is a general lack of respect for tradition. Although Ciongoli told them things were better in the United States, he would be hard-pressed to prove his point.

The Australians were clearly reflecting on their cultural decline in the face of assimilation. But at least 21% of their second-generation speaks the ancestral tongue. Our second generation is nearly all gone and the third and fourth generations are Italian in name only. We Italian Americans are beyond a decline and into a fall. Black tie galas and photo-ops now pass for Italian heritage. Were it not for the ubiquity of our cuisine and mafia movies, we would be just another ethnic group silently melting into the crowd.

There never was a grand strategy to carry our classical (Roman and Renaissance) civilization to America or to preserve that legacy. We Italians didn't bring our scholars, priests or intellectuals to America, as did the Jews, Greeks, Irish and Asian Indians, to mention just a few. We brought strong backs and village values.

We brought the notion that Italy is eternal and heritage passes on through religion or osmosis. Clearly, the main goal of our organizations is to encourage assimilation through scholarships and donations to medical charities. It is sort of ironic, after four or five generations, to even have Italian ethnic organizations if the goal is assimilation. Are we really supporting our cultural legacy by sending kids with as little as one Italian grandparent to business school? Wouldn't it make more sense to give that student the gift of one month in Italy rather than \$5,000 toward his six-figure college tuition? Shouldn't we be sponsoring traditional Italian bands, youth camps, cultural material and cultural centers rather than top-heavy Alzheimer organizations? Isn't it our heritage that is at risk of being erased from memory?

You can learn quite a bit from an IRS form 990, the one that charitable organizations file each year. In 2005, the "Big Three" Italian American organizations had revenues of \$14 million of which only \$774,000 went to what can be considered the perpetuation of Italic culture — a mere 5.5%. The rest of their donations, nearly \$5 million, went to culturally-neutral scholarships, medical charities, the Roman Catholic Church and general largesse. The bulk of their income, \$8 million, went to

office overhead, salaries and fundraising costs. Nothing to speak of went to anti-defamation or pre-teen cultural development. If there is a grand strategy it is to spread the wealth as thinly as possible to create an image of generosity and national prominence. The question one might ask is: if these organizations disappeared tomorrow, would sixteen million Italian Americans (or 25 million as some claim) be any the worse off? Would our media image or our children's aspirations be any different?

Do we suffer from the "gala syndrome?" In short, are we locked into a world that begins and ends in a catering hall? Are we seduced by tuxedos, journal ads and celebrity speakers into believing the Italian heritage is alive and well when 99.9% of Italian Americans are unaffected by these things? To paraphrase Calvin Coolidge, "The business of Italian American organizations is galas, not culture." Yet, after a century of galas we have no meaningful political action committee, as do the Jews or even recently arrived Asian Indians. After hundreds of millions of dollars spent, we have no national cultural center, library, orchestra, university, prep school or media arm. After five hundred years in America we have totally jettisoned our classical Roman/Renaissance roots and donned



The old "Beef Steak Dinner" has given way to the gala. But the goal is the same: project power and assimilation.

the mantle of the ever-grateful immigrant. Our communities still produce a bumper crop of guidos, goombahs and guidettes, not to mention mafia filmmakers and character actors who are now being honored to pump up gala sales. A century of bad images — organ-grinder/anarchist/fascist/mafioso — have taken a bloody toll on our psyche forcing us to seek our self-respect in an "American" way, rather than mining our vast legacy. Few other ethnic organizations have relegated their cultural heritage to the bottom rung of priorities.

On the positive side, some money has been spent on progressive cultural projects such as establishing a national Advanced Placement

test for Italian language students in high school and on NIAF's Gift of Discovery program of free trips to Italy for youngsters. Were this latter program, alone, to be funded with millions of dollars instead of a mere \$116,000, thousands of Italian American youngsters could be immersed in the Italian legacy. Were millions directed to cultural after-school programs

and summer camps for pre-teens, demand for Italian language would soar, especially if linked to future benefits such as trips to Italy and scholarships. This kind of strategy would hitch our future to the young and take the sting out of assimilation.

(Cont'd on p. 20)

**Less Than 6% of
Organizational Income
Supports the
Italian Heritage**



Here is how our major organizations chose to utilize their resources in 2005, according to their IRS Form 990 (available on line):

Summary: In 2005, the three largest Italian American organizations reported combined revenues of \$14,015,243. We estimate that only \$773,992 was actually used to foster Italian studies in the United States, a mere 5.5% of revenue. The main strategy appears to be to distribute modest grants averaging between \$1,000 to \$5,000 to individual projects and cultural organizations on a one-time basis. Larger donations are given to universities, on behalf of Italian American students, and to established charities. From an auditing standpoint this is a safe method of dispensing large funds. However, this approach leaves the cultural agencies (cultural centers, print media, youth programs, bands, museums, etc.) within the national community with meager resources to keep the heritage alive. Moreover, one may reflect on whether assimilation or heritage is, or should be, the priority. If it is assimilation, why do we need to fund it after four generations? Every organization and corporation always needs to ask the same question repeatedly: What is our mission?

Organization: Columbus Citizens Foundation, Inc (NYC)

Stated Mission: To Promote Italian Culture

Total revenue (2005): \$4,308,802

From membership: \$1,130,831

From dividends & interest: \$194,344

From Special Events: \$2,989,384 (incl. Columbus Day Parade \$1,985,100)

Total expenses: \$3,746,260 (resulted in \$562,542 surplus)

Net Assets: \$10,635,175

Staff Salaries, overhead & benefits: \$668,818

Top Executive Compensation: \$64,335 (Project Manager)

Meetings, Travel, Public Relations: \$45,561 for Marketing

Total Grants Dispersed: \$2,391,375*

Scholarships: \$2,119,725 (Colleges- \$964,400, Catholic High Schools-\$1,047,075, Catholic Elementary- \$108,250)

General grants: \$271,350 (incl: Boys Town of Italy-\$10,000, NY Medical College-\$36,100, SUNY Maritime College-\$10,000, Cooley's Anemia-\$35,000)

***Directly related to Italian culture in America:** approx. **\$282,380 (percentage of revenue 6.5%)** (This includes Italian cultural projects in America and 20% of college scholarships representing a fair estimate of students who pursue Italian studies as a major or minor)

Organization: Sons of Italy Foundation (Washington DC)

Stated Mission: To Support Educational, Medical Research and Charitable Programs

Total revenue (2005): \$1,848,981

 From membership: \$1,981,621

 From dividends & interest: \$37,993

 From Special Events: (-\$158,104 loss from National Education Awards Dinner & Raffle)

Total expenses: \$1,816,248 (resulted in a \$32,733 surplus)

Net Assets: \$1,261,776

Staff Salaries, overhead & benefits: \$209,151

Top Executive Compensation: \$166,029 (Executive Director)

Meetings, Travel, Public Relations: \$33,853 (conferences), \$21,984 (public relations)

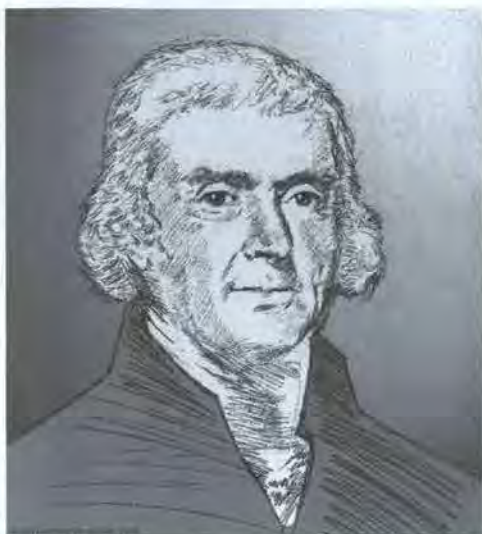
Total Grants Dispersed: \$366,030*

 Scholarships: \$110,000

[cont'd on p. 30]



JEFFERSON the Italophile



Drawing by David Anthony Vecchione

A Passion for Italy

A Perspective
on Thomas
Jefferson

by
Anthony Vecchione

When the American Republic was in its infancy and the Founding Fathers were designing a blueprint for a new nation, Italy was a recognized leader in the arts, music, agriculture, science and medicine.

While early statesmen including Madison, Franklin, and Adams were admirers and students of Italian culture, it was Thomas Jefferson, the Virginia attorney and author of the Declaration of Independence, a Renaissance man fluent in several languages, and an *aficionado* of literature, music, fine art and architecture, who was most enamored of the Italians. Jefferson's fondness for French and Italian culture has been well documented. And while his friendship with the Florentine physician Philip Mazzei has been chronicled by every legitimate Jefferson biographer, further exploration into Jefferson's life reveals that the extent to which he was influenced by Italy and all things Italian was extraordinary. Thomas Jefferson was a bona fide Italophile!

Jefferson, of Welsh, Scottish and English lineage, was fond of Roman and Renaissance art and literature. In his much-touted biography *Thomas Jefferson: A Life*, Willard Sterne Randall reveals Jefferson's passion for Classical Italy's rule of law and government:

"Since his college days under the enlightened tutelage of Dr. Small, Jefferson had talked and written of visiting Italy, fountainhead of the classical literature and architecture he most admired and which he considered, more than England, the proper model for the new American republic."

Randall points out that Jefferson called upon his friend Mazzei to seek the help of Italian city-states for Virginia during the Revolution. According to Randall, Jefferson was determined to break the United States' economic dependence on England and France by forging new trade ties with Italy. Jefferson, a passionate horticulturalist, was intent on diversifying plantation agriculture and improving the lives of workers in his native Virginia. In a letter to Governor John Rutledge of South Carolina in 1788, Jefferson wrote: "Italy is a field where the inhabitants of the Southern States may see much to copy in agriculture and a country with which we shall carry on considerable trade."

The close friendship between Jefferson and Mazzei comes as no surprise. The two men had much in com-

mon. Mazzei, the wine merchant and horticulturalist who was trained as a surgeon in Florence and settled in London, went on to Virginia where he introduced Italian grapes, olives, and fruit trees. He brought many Italian vineyard workers to the state where he and Jefferson were neighbors. The two men solidified their friendship and spent hours conversing on a wide-range of subjects from botany to classical antiquity.

When Jefferson sold Mazzei a parcel of land near Charlottesville, the Italian recruited Tuscan workers to build Jefferson's cherished home, Monticello ("Little Mountain"). Mazzei became such a trusted friend that at Jefferson's request, he embarked on a series of diplomatic missions to Europe on behalf of Virginia.

Jefferson's Italian Excursion

A scholar of ancient Rome, Jefferson was a voracious reader of Roman military history including Tacitus' history of the conquest of the British Isles, a work that he read in Latin. His appreciation of Roman, Italian and European history proved beneficial when he met with princes of Italy, Louis XVI, and Frederick the Great.

Jefferson traveled to Turin and Sardinia in 1787 where he visited the museum of antiquities and dined with the local dignitaries. One of his goals was to import Italian wines to America. He traveled further into the rice country of Northern Italy and to Italian dairies where he observed the processing and storage of Parmesan cheese. He learned how to make and store ice cream and brought the technique to Monticello. He also traveled extensively to the province of Lombardy and eventually to Lake Como.

While Jefferson regretted not getting to Rome or Naples, he did eventually make it to the rich banking centers of Genoa and Milan. He absorbed culture on the Italian Riviera and at the Gardens at Sestri. He attended plays and admired the magnificent harlequin marble floors and ceilings. According to Randall, after visiting Milan, Jefferson commented that the salon of the Casa Belgioiosa "was superior to anything that I have ever seen."

However, it was in agriculture where Jefferson discovered the superiority of the Italians. Jefferson, along with Mazzei, was intent on growing a different rice in the Carolinas. The Italians had developed a superior husking machine that accounted for the high quality of Piedmont rice. Jefferson wrote to his friend Edward Rutledge in South Carolina that he intended to export the rice to the colonies. Jefferson's association with Mazzei and other Italians reaped other benefits including the importation of Italian cherries, olives, lamponi raspberries and watermelon seeds from Naples.



The Marine Band was first a fife & drum group in 1798. In 1803, President Jefferson recruited musicians from Sicily, led by Maestro Gaetano Carusi, to transform it into today's band.



Monticello's Italian Touch

The design of Monticello was greatly influenced by the Palladian-style villas of Italian architect Andrea Palladio. Jefferson told friends that he considered Palladio's 1570 treatise on classical Roman architecture to be the Bible of architecture. In their book *Sprezzatura: 50 Ways Italian Genius Shaped the World*, Peter D'Epiro and Mary Desmond Pinkowish point to a letter written in 1817 by Jefferson to his Virginia colleague and future U.S. President James Madison regarding Palladio's seminal work: "We are sadly at a loss here for a Palladio. I had three different editions, but they are at Washington, and nobody in this part of the country has one unless you have. If you have, you will greatly aid us by letting us have the use of it for a year to come."

Jefferson maintained a life-long interest in music and tried to foster an appreciation of it in America. Even in the midst of the Revolution, Jefferson found time for music, which he called "the favorite passion of my soul." In a letter on Sept. 15, 1778, to the Italian naturalist, economist and chemist, Giovanni Fabbriani, Jefferson asserted: "If there is a gratification which I envy any people in this world it is to your country its music. This is the favorite passion of my soul, and fortune has cast my lot in a country where it is in a state of deplorable barbarism The bounds of an American fortune will not admit the indulgence of a domestic band of musicians. Yet I have thought that a passion for music might be reconciled with that economy which we are obliged to observe In a country where, like yours, music is cultivated and practiced by every class of men I suppose there might be found persons of those trades [gardener, weaver, cabinetmaker, stonemason] who could perform on the French horn, clarinet, or hautboy and bassoon, so that one might have a band of two French horns, two clarinets, and hautboys and a bassoon, without enlarging their domestic expanses." Jefferson asked Fabbriani's aid in procuring such a band of musical artisans.

Jefferson, an admirer and collector of fine art, was particularly fond of Italian Baroque painter Carlo Dolci. Dolci's work was easily distinguishable by the delicacy of the composition, and by an agreeable tint of color improved by judicious management of the *chiaroscuro*. Dolci's depictions of the suffering Christ or the sorrows of the *Mater Dolorosa* caught Jefferson's eye.

Jefferson also cultivated a friendship with many Italian skilled workman in agriculture as well as in the fine arts. Italian workman were recruited by Jefferson to engage in the construction of the Corinthian columns and decorative stone work on the U.S. Capitol building in Washington, D.C.

In his book: *Thomas Jefferson & the New Nation* by Merrill D. Peterson, Jefferson reportedly said: "I sent for Italian craftsman who were more richly endowed than native sculptors of ships' heads and mantelpieces."

The passion and reverence for 16th century Italy, Italian culture and sensibilities were not limited to Jefferson and America's Founding Fathers. Many of the early colonists cultivated an appreciation of various aspects of Italian culture that was considered in intellectual circles at the time to be highly advanced. The Italians from Sicily and Naples in the South, to Tuscany and Lombardy in the north, were in the vanguard of art, music, and architecture as well as recognized and respected leaders in science and medicine.

Unfortunately, history textbooks in the United States rarely depict the influence of Italian culture on Colonial America. Despite their relatively small numbers, Italian physicians, architects, farmers and craftsman played a vital role in the formation of the New Republic. At a time when Italian-Americans are still combating tiresome stereotypes and searching for an identity that doesn't draw solely on Southern Italian immigration, the omission of a strong and substantive Italian presence in the colonies in mainstream history texts has robbed Italian-American children of the truth about their ancestors and their heritage. *****

DEFINING SUCCESS, from p.14

may be a boon to the nation but, to date, they have offered little benefit to our community. Even Resolution 2442 demanded very little of the Congress. There were no reparations, not even an official apology from the president. Still, it showed that we do have issues and our leaders can work in unison.

Will Speaker Nancy Pelosi be there for us? Would a "President" Giuliani have helped us restore our immense patrimony here in America? The reality is both Pelosi and Giuliani have closer political ties to other communities. Both are committed supporters of Israel and Jewish causes. Maureen Dowd of the *New York Times* described Giuliani's pro-Israel stance as "his bear hug with Israel, so hearty that even W's embrace seems tepid in comparison." The Judeo-centric *New York Sun* characterized Giuliani's speech to a Jewish group as "full of kosher red meat, and the crowd really ate it up." Ken Silverstein of *Harpers Magazine* called Giuliani's 8-man advisory group during his short-lived presidential run "AIPAC's Dream Team." [AIPAC is the American Israeli Political Affairs Committee.] Among Giuliani's global strategies was to induct Israel into NATO, something that no U.S. president or European leader has ever suggested. Pelosi, with the best intentions, created a major international controversy trying to move a resolution concerning the

1915 murder of over a million Armenians through the House. She served her Armenian constituents at her own risk. Would she embrace an Italian American initiative with this same fervor?

The challenge for our community is to first agree on an agenda and then make our voices heard. We need to put our immigrant past in its proper perspective and restore our classical stature. Ironically, it is a non-Italian political leader that finds inspiration in our classical heritage. Senator Richard Byrd (D-WV), a constitutional expert, often relates our Congress to the Roman Senate and has written a book on the subject. Compare this to the Italian American state senator in Connecticut who recently resigned after word got out that he cut a deal with a known mobster to frighten his granddaughter's husband. This otherwise decent and educated man adopted a *Godfather* mentality to deal with his problem. We cannot continue to project a blue-collar, street-wise mentality. We cannot merely value our politicians as photo-ops and gala guests. Our politicians can be as effective as any others given the proper inspiration and prodding. If they are apathetic toward us, it is partly because we haven't defined our needs. And, of course, there is the money issue. We give nothing remotely comparable to what other groups give our politicians for their campaigns. Without an inspired community agenda and financial support, political success in America will remain an option only for others. *****



MARS: An Italian Obsession



Astronomer Galileo



Gian Domenico Cassini



Father Angelo Secchi

By Don Fiore

[Editor: The "red planet" has been a fixation for the people of Italy since the Romans. Mars was the Roman god of war. That god and planet were the inspiration of Roman leaders for a thousand years. Even today, the Italian for Tuesday is martedì, "Mars' Day."]

While conducting experiments with short wave radio equipment in 1920, Guglielmo Marconi caused a worldwide sensation by reporting the detection of mysterious signals emanating from the sky. Although the Italian inventor offered no definite opinion regarding their source, a sizeable portion of the public became convinced that the enigmatic transmissions were of intelligent, but non-human, origin.

And who could blame them? The possibility of extraterrestrial life has been a subject of intense speculation ever since Galileo and his telescope so dramatically broadened our concept of the universe. The great Italian master scientist had shown that the planets, previously seen as mere points of light with the naked eye, were actually spheres, giving startling proof that the solar system was home to other worlds which, at least in shape, were quite like our own.

Not everyone felt that way, of course. To the most orthodox minds, the idea was unthinkable since it robbed the Earth of at least a portion of its uniqueness in the Divine scheme. When the 16th century Italian philosopher Giordano Bruno preached about the plurality of worlds, the Catholic Church had him burned at the stake. His fate was not helped by the fact that he had nothing to back the theory beyond mere speculation. But less than ten years later, Galileo was starting to collect hard evidence in its support.

Still, the Church wasn't about to let the facts stand in the way of dogma and eventually, as everyone knows, Galileo's work earned him his own appointment before the Inquisition under charges of heresy.

Facts can be stifled only for so long, however, and the concept of multiple worlds gradually gained wide-spread acceptance. Once this happened, speculation over the possibility of extrater-

restrial life was not far behind. Back then, as it was, there was no way of knowing much about the physical composition of the various planets, much less the nature of their inhabitants. As far as any one knew, each of these worlds was as likely to accommodate life as any of its neighbors. But by the late 19th century, professional stargazers and laymen alike were focusing on one planet in particular as the principal subject of such speculation. That planet was Mars.

When people began speaking of life on Mars, and they often did so with deep conviction, they weren't thinking in terms of lowly microbes, but the highest order of intelligent beings, creatures capable of developing and maintaining a great, technologically advanced civilization. This notion became so widespread that the words "Martian" and "Men from Mars" were soon integrated into common speech. For years, they would be freely used as generic terms for any imagined beings from outer space. And as for the source of the mysterious radio signals intercepted by Marconi, need you wonder which of our neighboring worlds was immediately held as the prime suspect?

Mars is a globe of modest dimension, only about half the size of the Earth. Under typical conditions it shines none too brightly in the night sky and, to the untrained eye, is often difficult to spot among the countless stars. One might well wonder what made this particular pinpoint of light so deserving of human fixation. And the answer to that would be color. What made Mars immediately distinguishable to ancient stargazers was its distinctly reddish hue, and they could not help but make the connection between the color of the planet and the color of blood. When ancient civilizations began drawing links between celestial objects and their deities, Mars was invariably associated with their respective gods of war. The Sumerians, Assyrians, Egyptians, Persians, Greeks, and others all did this, but no people did so quite as intensely as the military-mind-



Giovanni Schiaparelli



ed Romans. The English terms "martial" and "march" derived directly from the name of the Italic war god Mars, testifying to the strength of that connection.

And it is perhaps fitting, given the Italic roots of the planet's namesake, that an impressive number of Italians played pivotal roles in the centuries-long quest to discover whatever intriguing secrets the Red Planet might hold.

Galileo, as noted above, became the first human being to see Mars as an actual sphere when he focused his rudimentary telescope on the planet in 1609. He even attempted to measure it, but the limited power of his instrument prevented him from seeing any of the distinguishable surface features that he needed to use as points of reference. In fact, he could detect nothing that suggested that Mars was anything more than a bland, blank-faced disk. With an entire universe filled with wondrous things that he could readily see waiting for his attention, Galileo abandoned Mars and focused his telescope elsewhere.

The first attempt at Martian cartography, then, had to wait until 1638, when another Italian astronomer named Francesco Fontana produced a rudimentary sketch of the planet's surface features. Though certainly a valiant effort, Fontana's map revealed more about the limitations of his own observational equipment than the topographical details of his subject. A few years later, and with the benefit of using what was probably the best telescope built to that date, another Italian observer named Niccolo Zucchi provided slightly more data by reporting the presence of several circular blotches on the face of Mars, though he was unable to identify their exact nature.

In 1659, Christiaan Huygens, an astronomer in Holland, timed the movement of the largest of these surface spots (probably Syrtis Major) to estimate that the Martian day lasted a very Earth-like 24 hours. Turning his attention toward the Red Planet in 1666, the Italian astronomer Gian Domenico Cassini confirmed Huygen's estimate, though he refined the actual figure to 24 hours and 40 minutes. Besides being the first to calculate the distance between Mars and Earth, Cassini produced some twenty maps of the Martian surface, and called attention to what might be ice caps on the planet that corresponded in position to our own polar zones.

While Cassini himself stopped cautiously short of making a positive affirmation of this, his nephew Giacomo Filippo Maraldi, also an astronomer with his eye on Mars, later made just such a declaration. Maraldi based his statement on the fact that the size of these ice caps varied with the seasons, expanding in the Martian winter and receding in summer exactly like their counterparts here. The German-British astronomer William Herschel, observing from England in the 18th century, showed the Martian axial tilt to be nearly identical to Earth's, meaning the regular occurrence of four annual seasons, just as we experience on our world. All of this data enforced the suggestion that Mars was, in at least a few very important basics, a miniature version of Earth.

By this time, even the Catholic Church had quietly accepted the viability of new astronomical theories developed through rigorous scientific observation, or at least it stopped burning people at the

stake over these sorts of things. This allowed not only the laity, but also scientifically-minded members of the clergy, to engage in astronomical research without fear of violent reprisal. One such man was Father Angelo Secchi, a Jesuit scholar who not only jumped into astronomy with both feet, but actually helped shuttle the Vatican into a new and previously unimaginable role as a credible institution for scientific research.

Even before Secchi was ordained in 1833, the Church had already built an observatory at the Collegio Romano; though, with notable prudence, its staff did not concern itself to any appreciable extent with matters beyond the Earth's confines. In fact, the observatory's chief function seems to have been providing the Roman citizenry with the exact time of day.

Secchi was appointed director of the observatory in 1852, and once in charge he ordered the existing facility to be phased out and the construction of a new, state-of-the-art observatory was initiated. Included with the newly installed equipment was an instrument of Secchi's own invention, the spectroscope, which measured emitted frequencies from celestial objects, thus permitting their chemical composition to be identified. This was a revolutionary breakthrough,

Secchi's spectroscope was a revolutionary breakthrough, and from it sprang a whole new branch of astronomy called astrophysics

and from it sprang a whole new branch of astronomy called astrophysics, the study of the actual physical compositions of stars, planets, and comets. Secchi's spectrographic techniques, brilliant as they might have been, were still in their infancy, and while the results of his analysis of starlight proved commendably accurate, his planetary data was on shaky ground.

Perhaps reacting to this data with a bit of premature enthusiasm, however, Secchi wrote: "The atmospheric constitution of the other planets which, in certain points, is so similar to ours as that of the stars is similar to that of the sun, persuades us that these bodies are in a state similar to that of our system". Because of his sterling and well-earned reputation in the scientific community, Secchi's opinion was accepted as yet another reliable confirmation that the composition of Mars was decidedly Earth-like.

Between 1858 and 1863, Secchi sketched and published the first color maps of the Martian surface, which showed a variety of hues and tints that indicated the presence of ice, water, and even vegetation. But what would prove to have even more dramatic consequences was the nomenclature used to identify one feature in particular. He labeled the triangular feature now known as Syrtis Major that extends northward from the center of the planet as "*Canale Atlantica*." His intent was to describe this feature as a great channel separating the east and west hemispheres of the planet. But his choice of the word "*canale*" had set an unintentional precedent.

The quality of observational equipment continued to improve, but there were still plenty of imperfections that were readily apparent to any astronomer laboring to visually detect planetary details through Earth's thick and turbulent atmosphere and across the vast distances of space. However, in 1877, the average orbital distance of 150 million miles between the Earth and Mars was predicted to be a trifling 35 million for a short time.

Among those who resolved to make the most out of this promis-

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MEDIA MADNESS

Italian American children and adolescents are the collateral damage in stereotyping and defamation. It is difficult enough to handle defamation on an adult level, but when the media buries stereotypes in movies and games designed for minors it becomes an insidious manipulation of growing minds. Steven Spielberg's *Goonies* in 1986 set the tone for Italian-named bad



guys (Fratelli Family) in an adolescent movie. He later went on to produce the first animated Italian bad guys in the form of mafia sharks in *Shark Tale*. This movie had a number of companion books by Scholastic which were sold in elementary and middle schools. In the publishing realm, *Nicky Deuce*, by *Sopranos* regular Steve Schirripa (Jewish on mom's side) had the honor of being the first adolescent novel to introduce the immoral "goombah" concept to minors. Nickelodeon has contracted to produce a TV movie or series on *Nicky Deuce*, perhaps another first.



The media's obsession with bad-guy Italians has permeated all forms of youth entertainment, from fairy tales to video games.

Item: (from Wikipedia) *The Emperor's New Clothes*: Many years ago, there lived an emperor who was quite an average fairy tale ruler, with one exception: he cared much about his clothes. One day he heard from two swindlers named *Guido and Luigi Farabutto* (emphasis added) that they could make the finest suit of clothes from the most beautiful cloth. This cloth, they said, was also invisible to anyone who was either stupid or not fit for his position.

Comment: The tailors in the original tale were not identified ethnically. Just about every internet reference to Guido and Luigi Farabutto is drawn word for word from this Wikipedia source. Giving the swindlers Italian names appears to be some modern adaptation, probably by a contemporary author with the idea of making the bad guy characters more "credible." Nothing new here. This was

also done with 20th Century Fox's 1994 remake of *Miracle on 34th Street*, when (for no plausible reason) the devious, alcoholic sham Santa Claus character (whose ethnicity was left unidentified in the original



version) was recast as Tony Falacchi. In addition, in Disney's 2005 reworking of *Cinderella* by Alan Zachary and Michael Weiner, the good Fairy Godmother character becomes an evil and malicious fairy "Godfather" named "*Franco Di Fortunato*".

- Don Fiore

Item: In video games, the Italian bad guy ranges from subtle to blatant.

Comment: In addition to those listed below, you can also find video games with traditional stereotypes such as *Grand Theft Auto*, *Gangland*, *The Godfather* (which even Coppola and Pacino have disavowed) and probably many more of which I am not yet aware.

-David Anthony Vecchione

Video Games

The Legend of Zelda (1986-Nintendo): Read the instruction manual of this classic game to discover that the evil ghosts are called 'Ghinis' (an Italian surname which sounds like, you guessed it... 'Guinea'!)

Animal Crossing (2001-Nintendo): If you reset the game without saving, you encounter a character named Mr. Resetti (get it?...RESET-TL.) He is a mole that lives underground. He carries a pick-axe and warns you not to reset the game again and about angering his family.

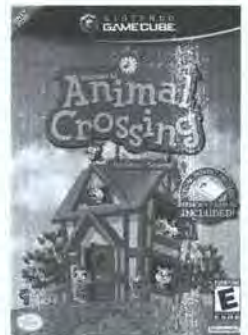
King's Quest (1990-Amiga remake): When you get to the big evil rat, type in "Look at rat"... You will see a prompt that describes it as a flesh-eating rat. Then type in "Look at mouse"... The rat will respond: "I ain't no mouse, *capisce*?" This will confirm that the rat is Italian. The original 1984 version did not have the added stereotype.

Hero's Quest (1990-Amiga): An annoying character named 'Bruno' speaks like a wiseguy informant and forces you to deplete nearly all of your money just to hear his useless advice.

Mission: Impossible (1990-Ultra): Level 2 takes place in Venice... After you are done racing your motorboat through the waterway streets, you end up in a church where all of the Italian civilians attack you and you must murder all of them. Keep in mind, at all other levels, you must avoid civilian casualties.

Pokemon (1995-Nintendo) "Team Rocket," an organization that does all sorts of goofy, shady business is run by a well-dressed,

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MARS, from p. 24

ing opportunity was Giovanni Virginio Schiaparelli, director of Milan's Brera Observatory. Schiaparelli was already well known and highly respected among his colleagues for the brilliant research he had conducted on comets and meteors, though his name seldom if ever appeared in print outside of the scientific journals. But while he did not aspire to international fame, it was nonetheless waiting just around the corner.

As things turned out, the crystal clear Italian sky offered nearly perfect observational conditions when Mars approached. This allowed Schiaparelli to draw the most remarkably intricate portrait of the planet's surface to that date. His map displayed numerous irregularly-shaped regions of light and dark shades distributed across the landscape. He called the latter "seas," more or less in convention with the terminology applied to similarly-appearing regions on the moon. By protocol, Schiaparelli, as the discoverer of these myriad features, had the right to name them. With admirable wisdom, he chose not to name a single site after any living or deceased human being as astronomers had been doing with the surface details of the moon, believing the practice lent to national biases. Instead, he used place names drawn from the Bible and from Classical mythology, setting a trend that was adopted as the standard in Martian nomenclature.

But the bombshell in Schiaparelli's drawings lay in a complex network of perfectly straight lines that were shown crisscrossing the planet from one "sea" to the next. Schiaparelli later acknowledged that he had doubted his own eyes upon initially detecting these features. They simply seemed too straight, too rigidly angular in their course and direction, to be the work of nature. Further, the appearance of the lines varied in clarity from one observational period to the next, sometimes being sharp and distinct, sometimes fading to near invisibility.

Still, by 1881 Schiaparelli was confident enough in what he had viewed to publish an analysis. Like all good scientific reports, it was solidly objective, prosaic and technical, crafted without a single sentence or phrase to quicken the heartbeat or stir the emotions. Yet, his text and maps contained one particular word that inadvertently caused the world to gasp. Schiaparelli reached back to Secchi's earlier terminology and used the word "*canali*" to describe the lines he had seen running across the Martian surface.

Quite naturally, the word appeared in English translations as "canals," implying that what Schiaparelli had spotted were not nat-

ural features at all, but the engineering work of an advanced, extra-terrestrial civilization! While the Italian astronomer made no such assertions and, in fact, noted that a more appropriate translation would have been "channels," others celebrated the news as hard evidence that Mars indeed hosted intelligent life.

No one ran further with this idea than Percival Lowell, an American millionaire with plenty of time and money to indulge in anything that caught his fancy. His imagination fired up by the talk of Martian canals, Lowell purchased acreage on a 7,000-foot high plateau near Flagstaff, Arizona, and on this spot, which he christened "Mars Hill," the wealthy socialite constructed a state-of-the-art observatory with the explicit purpose of solving the mystery of who or what built the canals of Mars.

Where Schiaparelli, imbued in the rigorous professional discipline, advised "great prudence in the conclusions one draws from his observations," Lowell lost no time in blitzing the press with his conviction that the canals were unquestionably engineered structures. Mars, he speculated, was a decaying world, its thin atmosphere causing the gradual but steady loss of water through evaporation until most of the planet was rendered a desert. The canals were the products of a valiant if desperate attempt by the Martians to fend off their extinction by irrigating the planet with meltwater from the Martian icecaps! Romantic and imaginative as they may have been, his views were communicated persuasively enough to make the canals, at least in the public mind, as much an accepted fixture of the solar system as the rings of Saturn or the craters of the Moon for the next seventy-odd years. Not until the direct encounters with Mars by NASA's Mariner and Viking programs of the 1970s and 1980s were the canals conclusively shown to be objects of fantasy.

The age of individual astronomers like Schiaparelli or Lowell scanning the skies independently in their own observatories has long since vanished, replaced by massive teams of researchers, engineers and technicians representing a wide range of disciplines under large national and multinational space agencies. Our knowledge of Mars has since increased immeasurably, and Italian scientists continue to be major contributors to the ever-growing data pool, as importantly if not as glamorously as their predecessors from centuries past. Most recently, the Italian Space Agency played a leading role in the execution of the European Space Agency's Mars Express project, which successfully sent a robot lander to collect geological data from the Martian surface in 2003. ****

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BEFORE THE GREAT WAVE

The Cuneo Family of Chicago

An Interview with John F. Cuneo, Jr. by Bill Dal Cerro

In 1847, the city of Chicago was a mere 10 years old, still a marshy swampland yet already showing signs of becoming a future booming metropolis. Yankee businessmen from the East Coast had begun investing in the area, predicting — correctly — that the city's proximity to both Lake Michigan and the Mississippi would make it a valuable transportation hub.



John F. Cuneo, Jr.

In that same year, two ambitious brothers from the northern Italian hill-town of Cuneo (*coo-NAY-oh*) took their inheritance from their family's agricultural business and set sail for America, inspired by stories of the California Gold Rush. After a long, exhausting boat ride, John B. and Riccardo Cuneo (Americanized to *COO-nee-oh*) arrived in Chicago, intending to use it as a taking-off point for St. Joseph, Missouri, the true departure point for westward travel.

Riccardo did, indeed, finish the journey, finding gold of another kind in California—first, by investing his money in a general store for miners, selling everything from bacon to pick-and-shovels; and then, years later, owning a branch of that store in San Francisco's North Beach.

One of the services his store provided to the local Italian community was banking; thus was born the Bank of Italy. One of Riccardo's 14 children, daughter Clorinda Agnes Cuneo, later met and married a man named A.P. Gianinni, who was promptly given a job at the bank by his new father-in-law. Although the Cuneo family retained ownership in the Bank of Italy for many years, Giannini, a shrewd businessman himself, transformed the company into the Bank of America, one of our nation's greatest success stories.

John, though, stayed behind in Chicago, drawn to the possibilities that this rough-and-tumble town might have to offer. It wasn't long before this newly-arrived immigrant parlayed his own inheritance money into business success, balancing the ownership of general stores (the early version of grocery stores) with ever-increasing real estate investments. Within decades, the Cuneo name became a financial force in the Windy City, making them one of the first family business dynasties in Chicago high society.

"They were just natural entrepreneurs," says John F. Cuneo Jr, 76, when asked what made the Cuneos so special. "They had that pioneering spirit. They saw opportunities and weren't afraid to take risks."

In addition to his great-grandfather John B. and great-great uncle Riccardo, Cuneo's lineage includes the following:

- Grandfather Frank, a real-estate magnate, early investor of the Essanay Film Studio and Theaters, fixture on Chicago's Gold Coast, and a director for the 1893 Columbian Exposition (he even named two of his sons Americo and Columbus);
- Father John F. Cuneo, Sr., who left Yale and founded Cuneo Press, one of the most successful printing companies in the U.S., boasting five plants around the country; served as director of the 1933 World's Fair; revived the struggling National Tea Company after World War II; and purchased the Hawthorn Melody Farms, a major dairy supplier and farming community (now sold) which still exists near the family's Italianate mansion in Vernon Hills, Illinois;

• And, currently, John F. Cuneo, Jr., who made Hawthorn Melody Farms into an even bigger household name and who now oversees the family's various business investments, such as real estate and shopping malls.

In 1994, Cuneo memorialized the family name by turning their mansion into the Cuneo Museum and Gardens, where visitors can tour the spacious grounds or event planners can rent out the facilities for weddings, birthday parties or the occasional Hollywood feature film ("My Best Friend's Wedding," starring Julia Roberts, shot many of its outdoor scenes there).

Cuneo was reminiscing about his illustrious ancestors from the sitting room of his own 512-acre estate, which is perched atop what he jokingly, yet accurately, describes as "Northern Illinois'



An early Cuneo family portrait dating from the 1860s. Northern Italians settled in Chicago and California decades before their southern cousins arrived.

only mountain."

Built in 1952 from original plans by Frank & Lloyd Wright, the Cuneo home is, as the Romans would have said, *sui generis* (unique): Octagonal in shape, much like the Pentagon in Washington D.C., it features full-length windows all around the exterior, encompassing views of a Mediterranean style terrace, an



outdoor swimming pool, a 30-acre lake, and fields where colorful peacocks, white elk deer and herds of brown buffalo peacefully sit in the sun.

It immediately reminds one of San Simeon, the vast California estate built by the newspaper and motion picture magnate William Randolph Hearst — and fittingly so. "Hearst and my father were good friends," says Cuneo.

"He actually helped Hearst out when he was struggling. My father's printing company printed all of his movie magazines and he never gave Hearst a bill until he was able to pay. Hearst never forgot that."

Years later, as a 9-year-old, Cuneo visited San Simeon with his father. The highlight of his visit was accompanying actress Marion Davies, Hearst's protégé, on a horseback tour of the estate.

"She could see that I was bored with all of the business and dinner stuff," he recalls. "So she took me outside and we both rode horses all over the grounds. She showed me around. She didn't have to do that. She was one of the nicest people I have ever met."

In typical Midwestern fashion, Cuneo's tone is modest, even



Clorinda Agnes Cuneo and husband A.P. Giannini. The two families built empires in early California

humble, without the slightest hint of braggadocio. Yet the Cuneo family's approach to business was anything but low-key. They seemed to have an instinctive knack for suc-

"No one looked down on Northern Italians."

cess—a "go-out-and-do-it" quality, Cuneo calls it—which seems distinctly American.

When asked if his family felt the stings of any anti-Italian prejudice during their early years, Cuneo replies: "Let me turn it around on you this way: My grandfather in Chicago and my uncle and Giannini in California were the ones who got things done. People looked up to them. Italians were the big deal. No one looked down on Northern Italians."

Cuneo calls A.P. Giannini "a genius, an absolute genius." He recalls meeting him once as a child: "He came out to Chicago to meet my dad. He was a tall, heavy-set, imposing man. And when he came out here, it was a social visit; it wasn't about a business deal. He didn't need to hustle. That's just the way he was.

"People look at me funny when I say this, but it's absolutely true: Giannini is more responsible than any one man in developing California as a state. He financed businesses, movie studios, many of the wineries...The winemakers were Italian, too, by the way."

The Cuneos' Chicago roots run deep. Some of the stately mansions which dot well-to-do Astor Street near the Ambassador Hotel were built for the children of John B. Cuneo. "You can still see the Cuneo name engraved on the stones," he says. There's also a radiant stained-glass window bearing their name near the altar of the Assumption Church near the Loop. It was one of the first all-Italian Catholic churches in Chicago (1880), and Frank Cuneo was largely responsible for building it.

Family history came full circle recently when John Jr. and his

wife took a cruise ship along the Italian coast. One of the stops was in Genoa, where his great-grandfather and great-great uncle first boarded the ship that took them to America. Ironically, despite previous attempts, John Jr. has yet to visit the town that bears his family's name.

"I swear there's some kind of jinx," he says, chuckling. "The first time, the French wouldn't allow Americans to fly in from Nice, something to do with visas. The next time, while we were in Monte Carlo, I arranged for a car to come and get us but the roads were too icy and that was it. And the third time, during this recent trip, the ship couldn't dock due to rough seas!

"From what I recall my grandfather telling me, the family house was rather unusual, it had three levels going down the side of a mountain. One of them was a storage area, apparently cattle barns of some kind. The family was into agriculture.

"I doubt if the house is still there, there's been so much development. Cuneo was known as a chestnut-growing area but now it's the computer chip capital of Italy. People tell me the air is absolutely pure there, so it makes sense."

When asked to describe the Italian people, Cuneo might as well as be describing their American cousins, the Cuneos of Chicago: "They built things, they invented things, they were do-ers and go-getters. They have a 'go-do-it-and-get-it-done' spirit. Italy still has roads which date from Roman times. Talk about knowing how to build things!" ****

Media Madness, Games, from p.25

evil man named Giovanni.

Soul Calibur II (2003-Namco/Nintendo): The agile, creepy, undead and quasi-gay character named 'Voldo' is supposed to be from Palermo. Upon reading his player bio, you will also see that he once worked for a "Merchant of Death" named 'Vercci'.



Super Mario Bros. (1985-Nintendo): After finding out the horrible truth about the 'Ghinis' and the whole 'Legend of Zelda'

thing, I became suspicious and decided to look up the history of Super Mario.

Mario first appeared in the arcade game 'Donkey Kong' in 1981, but he was simply called 'Jump Man'. He was supposed to be a carpenter who needed to save his girlfriend from the nemesis ape. This had all been created by Shigeru Miyamoto in Japan. When they wanted to put Jump Man in another game, the sketch ideas were sent to Nintendo's New York headquarters. The landlord of the building was Mario Segali, who happened to be from Italy. To the president of Nintendo at the time, the 'Jump Man' sketches looked just like Mario Segali. Since then, Super Mario has become Nintendo's mascot and the games in the series have made Nintendo millions of dollars since the mid-80's. And although sporting a cute, lighthearted appearance, Mario is nevertheless a walking stereotype for kids, complete with the broken-English accent. One game critic describes Mario as simply "a goofy, fat Italian plumber."



GIUSEPPE GARIBALDI

Two Centuries 1807-2007

[ED: This year marks the 200th anniversary of the birth of Giuseppe Garibaldi. Few people know or appreciate the accomplishments of this general and revolutionary. We can think of no other human being who represented internationalism and patriotism at the same time. He was a military leader like George Washington, but also a revolutionary who led forces of independence in South America and defended the French nation during the Franco-Prussian War. His reputation as "Hero of Two Worlds" has never been bestowed on any other. At heart he was a defender of human rights, as this article plainly shows.]

A CALL TO ARMS FROM AMERICA

by Don Fiore

The 19th-century Italian soldier and patriot Giuseppe Garibaldi played an unusually diverse number of roles throughout the long drama that was his life. At one time or another, he found himself occupied as a merchant mariner, a school teacher, a general in the Royal Italian Army, a general in the French Army, a diplomat, a factory worker, a delegate to the Italian Parliament, a farmer and a guerrilla leader in the jungles of South America. In the course of his performance in the more prominent of these occupations, one nation was created and the histories of at least a half dozen others were altered. But destiny came close to casting him in yet another role which, had events turned out differently, would have had a direct effect on our own country's history.

On April 12, 1861, Fort Sumter suffered the furious bombardment of Confederate artillery that signaled the commencement of the American Civil War. The attack and the events immediately following it, which included the stunning seizure of important Federal military posts at Harper's Ferry and Norfolk, revealed how painfully unprepared the Union forces were for the conflict. President Lincoln, barely a month in the White House, ordered a blockade of Southern ports, only to learn that most of his navy was either far at sea or docked in foreign harbors. The Union Army numbered a mere 16,000 and was likewise scattered across the vastness of the country. To its further distress, many of the army's best generals had defected to the Confederacy, leaving Lincoln with a dangerous shortage of competent military leadership.

It was this troubled state of affairs that inspired J. W. Quiggle, the American consul to Belgium, to suggest the recruitment of Garibaldi to the Union cause. The idea was proposed to Secretary of State William Seward, who found that the more he considered the thought the more it appealed to him.

By this time, Garibaldi's fame and reputation as a champion of freedom were at their peak. Only a year earlier, he had completed his brilliantly victorious war in Southern Italy, liberating that portion of the country from its corrupt and tyrannical Bourbon rulers. He continued to demonstrate, by word and deed, his stalwart devotion to democratic principles, and had yet to take up his sword except in their vigorous defense.

His past exploits had shown him to be absolutely steadfast in his commitments, impervious to all risks or dangers, scrupulously honest, and virtually disinterested in material rewards. He was a living legend and a shining symbol of liberty, genuinely loved by democratic-minded people in every corner of the world.

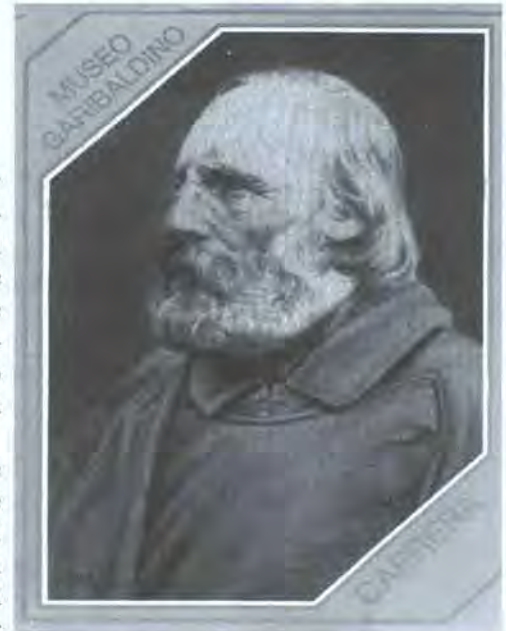
Seward was also aware of Garibaldi's own admiration for the United States, where the Italian had found refuge during a period of exile. He had even applied for American citizenship, though the act was never formalized. In Seward's analysis, the compilation of all of these facts made the securing of Garibaldi's services seem not just advantageous, but plainly logical, and he took immediate steps toward this end.

With Lincoln's assent, Seward instructed H.S. Sanford, the U.S. Minister at Brussels, to travel to Italy and offer Garibaldi a major general's commission, the Union Army's second highest rank, and to inform him that a large, well-equipped force would be placed at his unrestricted disposal.

Garibaldi, meanwhile, had been paying close attention to events in America, and his sympathies were clearly with Lincoln's government. His initial response to Sanford was encouraging. He stated that if his sovereign Victor Emmanuel, whom he had so recently helped to become King of Italy, had no objection, he would indeed consider the possibility of fighting for the Union.

Sanford acted immediately in contacting the Royal Italian Ministry at Torino, and permission for Garibaldi to take up arms in America

cont'd on p. 31



What Grand Strategy? from p. 20

(SONS OF ITALY FOUNDATION- continued)

General grants: \$256,030 (Alzheimers-\$142,602, Cooley's Anemia-\$71,428,
Hurricane Katrina Relief-\$25,000, 911 Memorial Fund-\$15,000, Disaster Relief Fund-\$1,000,
It-Am Historical Society-\$1,000,

***Directly related to Italian culture in America: \$23,000 (percentage of revenue: 1%)** (This includes Italian cultural projects in America and 20% of college scholarships representing a fair estimate of students who pursue Italian studies as a major or minor)

Organization: National Italian American Foundation NIAF (Washington, DC)

Stated Mission: Advocate in Washington for 25 million Italian Americans, Raising the prominence of all things Italian, Making Italian American part of the national conversation, Help our young people, Promote the history, heritage and accomplishments of Italian Americans, Protect the character of Italian Americans in media and arts.

Total revenue (2005): \$7,857,460

From membership: \$4,034,907

From dividends & interest: \$113,733

From Special Events: \$3,552,079 (includes Gala \$2,709,977)

Total expenses: \$7,932,670

Net Assets: \$7,012,179

Staff Salaries, overhead & benefits: \$1,663,837

Top Executive Compensation: \$323,292 (Executive Director)

Meetings, Travel, Public Relations: \$1,165,615 (Conferences/meetings/conventions), \$163,213 (travel), \$548,794 (public relations)

Total Grants Dispersed: \$2,962,794*

Scholarships: \$381,159 to American students, \$112,450 to Italian students in Italy

Special grants: \$459,983 to "Victims Grant relief" sent to Vatican City

Pass-thru of private endowments: \$1,281,270 (incl \$1 million to Dartmouth University)

Miscellaneous Grants: \$145,660

Special Programs ----- "Gift of Discovery": \$116,270 (American students to visit Italy)

"Graduates to Leaders": \$31,440 (Students to visit Washington DC)

"Teach the Teachers": \$19,951

Cultural Programs: \$11,484

***Directly related to Italian culture in America: \$468,612 (percentage of revenue 6%)** (This includes Italian cultural projects in America and 20% of college scholarships representing a fair estimate of students who pursue Italian studies as a major or minor)

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Garibaldi, from p.29

was promptly granted. But his participation was still far from being a certainty. Garibaldi advised Sanford by letter that there were additional conditions to his service upon which he must insist. First, the rank of major general was unacceptable. If he were to serve, it had to be as Commander In Chief of the whole Union Army! Following that, President Lincoln would have to officially declare the war's primary purpose to be the total abolition of slavery within the United States.

Sanford was speechless. The position of Commander In Chief, by its very definition, belonged exclusively to the President himself. Even if it were constitutionally possible to assign supreme command to someone other than Lincoln, Sanford knew that the West Point hierarchy would never allow so high an office to be occupied by a foreign general, no matter who he was.

And the war's purpose, of course, was the preservation of the Union. Lincoln was still calling only for the containment of slavery, not its complete abolition. The situation in America may have been grave, but it hadn't reached a point at which outsiders could start dictating its national policies.

Sanford hastened to meet with Garibaldi face to face, and for two days the American patiently explained the impossibility of these terms. But the Italian held fast. As a longtime opponent to slavery, he regarded the question of its abolition as his chief interest in American affairs.

Garibaldi reminded Sanford that he was no mercenary. The war would have to have a greater, more universal purpose before he could take part in it. Unless the Union's principal motive was elevated to abolition, he preferred not to get involved.

But if not Garibaldi himself, the Garibaldino spirit engaged itself in the struggle through the formation of a special corps of Union volunteers which styled itself the "Garibaldi Guard" and took the famous red shirt as its uniform. And when Abraham Lincoln finally did outlaw slavery with his Emancipation Proclamation on New Year's Day, 1863, Garibaldi was pleased. He eloquently praised the act in a letter to the President, which he ended by stating, "*We are sadly reminded that this old Europe has not found the mind or heart equal to yours.*"

DID GARIBALDI BECOME AN AMERICAN?

by

Edward Corsi, reprint from *Atlantica Magazine*, 1933

Did Garibaldi, while in this country eking out a bare existence in Meucci's candle factory on Staten Island, become an American citizen? Every now and then this question comes to the fore, and somehow it is never answered definitely.

That in 1850 he had filed his Declaration of Intention, or "first paper" we know. It is so stated in the passport issued to him by Mayor Kingsland bearing the date of April 2nd of that year. But that he actually completed his naturalization is highly improbable though the records are by no means conclusive. On March 9, 1855, he wrote to a friend in Italy a letter revealing disappointment at his failure to acquire citizenship "of this great Republic."

"I have tried in vain," he says, "to become an American citizen. This in spite of the fact that in the course of two visits I have been in the country about one year, have sailed under the American flag, and have had friends and acquaintances interested in my case. The laws of the country require a formal declaration registered in one of the cities of the Union and a statement renouncing allegiance to one's native country. The required length of residence on American soil is five years."

This would seem to set at rest all doubts on the matter; but what leaves the question an open one is another letter, dated 1862, and addressed to the American Consul in Vienna. The Italian liberator, anxious to serve the Union cause, writes: "Sir, I am a prisoner and dangerously wounded and I cannot, therefore, dispose of my services at this time. However, I am sure I shall be restored to freedom and should my wounds heal I shall be in condition to satisfy my desire to serve the American Republic, of which I am a citizen, and which is now fighting for universal liberty."

That Garibaldi was or was not an American citizen in the absence of more direct evidence we have no way of telling. But that he admired this country and was anxious to be one of its subjects, there can be no doubt. He found on American soil warmth and

hospitality, and, what is more, a people in deep sympathy with his aspirations.



The Antonio Meucci House in Rosebank, Staten Island, NY, where Giuseppe Garibaldi stayed while in America, now owned and operated by the New York Grand Lodge, Order Sons of Italy in America.

GARIBALDI VIGIL

Every year since 1998, the Italic Institute's Lionel Bottari has demonstrated his admiration for Giuseppe Garibaldi by laying a wreath at his statue in Chicago on the anniversary of his birthday, July 4, 1807. As a proud Italophile and student of history, Lionel underscores his respect for the Hero of Two Worlds by donning the uniform of a *garibaldino* — red shirt and kepi. It was the uniform worn by the "One Thousand" who liberated Sicily and southern Italy from the Spanish-Neapolitan Bourbons. It was also the uniform of American Civil War's Garibaldi Guard of which some Italians were a part. ****



image that draws attention. And when somebody talks about *The Sopranos* our fellows like that attention, not understanding that it's negative attention. It does stereotypes people and it pigeonholes them.

IIA: Can you cite an example of when you were particularly proud of your Italian-American roots?

Zinni: When I was the commander of the Marine expeditionary force on the West Coast, which included an air wing, an infantry division and a logistics unit. I was a three-star general at the time and was the commander of the force. As luck would have it, the division commander was also an Italian-American as was the air wing commander and the artillery commander. They called us the "Italian-American Expeditionary Force" of the Marine Corps. One day, during a change of command ceremony in one unit, this older man stepped out in front of me as I got out of my car, he had tears in his eyes and he said to me, "You don't know me but I was a sergeant in the Marine Corps during World War II in the Pacific." He went on to say, "I just want you to know that I never thought I would see the day where there would be Italian-American Generals." He told me how proud he was of this. He said that back during the war he never thought that would happen. So I said to him, it wouldn't have happened for us if you hadn't done what you did. You earned us the right to be here.

To me, that said it all. That story says a lot about where we've come and sometimes we don't appreciate that. That came on the backs of our parents and others who didn't have those opportunities but earned us those opportunities because they proved themselves. ****

A BOOK REVIEW

by Rosario A. Iaconis

Even among soldier-statesmen, General Tony Zinni is a *rara avis*. Conversant in the grit and gore of warfare, he is equally fluent in the art of diplomacy and cultural outreach. While so many of his contemporaries in the current administration sold their souls and sullied their integrity in support of a poorly planned, haphazardly executed war in Mesopotamia, Zinni warned us that invading Iraq would be nettlesome.

But this is no wilting pacifist. Rather, Zinni embodies the pragmatic warrior in search of peace. The former Commander-in-Chief of U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) makes no bones about using America's prodigious military strength and considerable influence to mold the world. Where he parts company with the neoconservative war hawks, however, is that the general does not seek monsters to destroy. He harbors no agenda other than protecting the nation and promoting democratic values.

Zinni knows that democracy does not emerge from the barrel of a gun. Nor can a Jeffersonian republic flourish in regions with differing languages, cultures, ethnicities, religious sects and tribal customs. The enemy of my enemy may be my friend today; tomorrow he could become a deadly foe. (The Italians taught us in Somalia that a great power must break bread with all the warlords, not just those we deem to be the most amicable.)

Any progress General David Petraeus is currently making in Iraq owes much to Zinni's approach. Unlike so many administration proconsuls, Tony Zinni does not look to curry favor with a particular White House faction. His experience as President Bush's special Middle East envoy a few years back no doubt reinforced his aversion to cant in diplomacy.

General Zinni knows the importance of gaining trust from both sides in the negotiation process: "Every Palestinian and every Arab automatically assumes that any American who walks in to mediate a situation is in there as Israel's broker."

The Battle For Peace codifies what needs to be done in an exotic post-Cold War world we never envisioned. Once the Berlin Wall fell, so did our old paradigms. Today, Islamic fanaticism, terrorism and assorted asymmetric threats must be confronted. But we cannot do so by refighting World War Two or continuing the twilight struggle against communism. September 11 taught us that we must adapt to this altered world order.

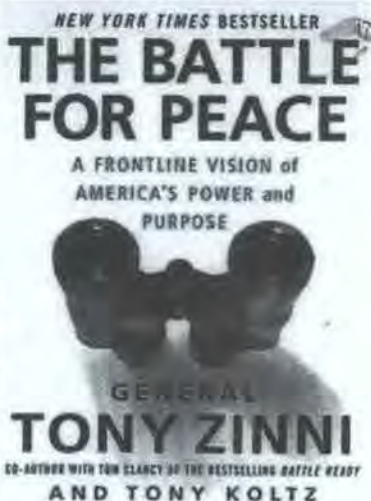
Playing the world's action hero, however, will not make Al Qaeda go away. Nor will brute military power and superior technology force Shiites, Sunnis and Kurds—as well as Muslims in Indonesia, Pakistan and Africa—to accede to our way of life.

Zinni disdains our risibly flawed response to global instability: "We have already made the mistake of declaring war on one of its more dangerous symptoms—terrorism . . . and called it *officially* the 'Global war on Terrorism.' Think about it: We've declared war on a *tactic*—terrorism—not on an ideology, not on a nation-state. We measure success in this war *tactically*: in terrorists killed, finances disrupted, cells taken down. This is no way to fight terrorism . . . or to fight instability."

General Zinni's way to win the battle for peace involves nothing less than a sweeping and comprehensive integration of our political, military, and economic power—in concert with other international actors, organizations and world bodies—to create the conditions that will make the world safe for stability.

China is rapidly flexing its diplomatic and economic muscles on the African continent and other hotbeds of sectarian violence, squalor and political instability. Can the United States do any less? Are we so blinded by simplistic and outdated military and foreign policy doctrines that we cannot respond adequately?

With this *cri de coeur*, Tony Zinni shows how the arsenal of democracy can secure the peace and win the battle for the hearts and minds of all of the world's citizens. ****



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