

# *The Founders' Log*

No. 11

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## Founders of the Italic Studies Institute, 1987

*Stefano Gristina*

*John Mancini*

*Carl Pescosolido*

Dear Member,

We have much to report.

Our 12th Annual Gala was superb! We were back at the Waldorf-Astoria with over 300 guests, and topped last year's profit. Thanks to our President Vince Pizzulli and his Board of Fifty, we spread the work more evenly and brought in some new blood.

Hopefully, everyone received issue XXIX of *The Italic Way Magazine*. No other organization can boast a more informative and thought-provoking periodical. We need to produce more issues and expand circulation. But as anyone knows, in the magazine business it takes millions of dollars to achieve full professional status. We work on a shoestring. No. XXX is in the works.

The past months have also demonstrated our fighting spirit against negative media. Rosario Iaconis, our *Italic Way* Director, has had an op-ed piece condemning the anti-Italic movie *Summer of Sam* published in Long Island's *Newsday* and reprinted in many Italian-American periodicals. Bill Dal Cerro, who heads our Chicago council, not only succeeded in having his opinions published in Chicagoland's major newspapers, but even led a protest of ISI stalwarts against *Mickey Blue Eyes* and *The Sopranos* which was reported in the *Chicago Tribune*. Our Institute will not knuckle under to negative media, as most others have done. It is ethnic suicide to leave it unopposed. We have the intellect, the strategy, and the will to win. It's money we lack.

In the coming months we the Governors hope to turn a new page in our small Institute's history. With the active support of the various councils (Executive, Plenary, Advisory) we plan to launch a full-scale effort to attract large donors -- men and women of means who will become Governors and invest in Italic Studies. Only with significant infusions of cash can we rise to the heights we must reach in order to make a national impact. Your generous support through dues and contributions has helped us expand *Aurora*, but to get *Aurora* and our other programs fully staffed and funded we will need hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Speaking of *Aurora* and our future generations, I had occasion to attend a dance recital of my 14-year-old daughter, Antonia. The show was a tribute to American theater, and I can tell you that the school-age children put on a performance worthy of a Broadway production. Although this was an American review, it made me think about how other ethnic groups are preserving their culture: Jewish Klezmer bands, Scottish Bagpipers, Irish Step Dancing, Polish Polka groups, Black Church Choirs. We, in turn, may have an occasional *tarantella* group, but little else to compete with other ethnic Americans. The truth is, we have allowed our culture to be portrayed as purely mafia movies and food commercials. *Aurora*, our Concert Band, Project Italia, and *The Italic Way* are our comeback tools. They are vital if we are to have a positive identity in the next millennium. These programs must be underwritten. Let's make the supreme effort.

Best Wishes, John Mancini, Chairman

### Dues Increased

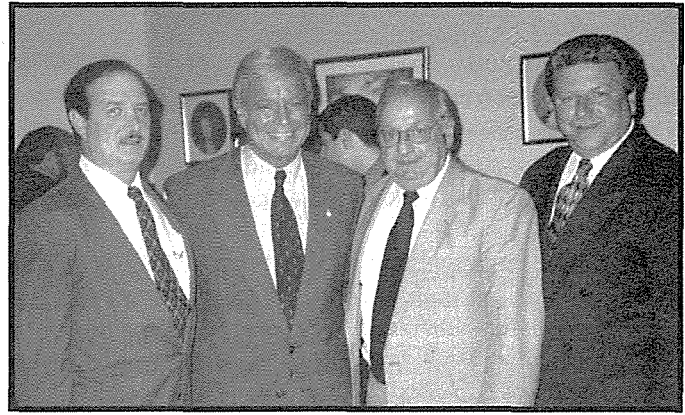
By a unanimous decision of the officers, Plenary Council dues were increased from \$75 per annum to \$150. This is only the second increase in 12 years. With some 200 council members in New York, we hope to show members around the country our serious commitment to funding the Institute.

### June Luncheon

Our Plenary Council's June luncheon was held at Trattoria Alba on Manhattan's East 34th Street. The guest speaker was **Anthony Catalano**, Senior Vice President of Morgan Stanley (Connecticut). We also used the event to present New York FBI Director **Louis Schiliro** with his Law Enforcement Award, as he had been unable to attend the May ceremony at the Waldorf-Astoria.



**FBI Director  
Louis Schiliro**



**(l.to r.) John Mancini, Peter Vallone  
Vince Pizzulli, Frank Fellone**

### September Luncheon

New York City Council Speaker **Peter Vallone** was our guest of honor at the September Plenary Council Luncheon, which was held at *Tiro a Segno* (The Italian Gun Club) in Greenwich Village. Mr. Vallone questioned Mayor Rudy Guiliani's vocal support of *The Soprano's* and other mob fictions. He also pledged funding for an *Aurora* site in his home borough of Queens -- it will complete our locations in New York City.

### Golf Outing

In August, 120 golfers met at the Rockville Links in Rockville Centre, NY, in support of ISI's programs. President Vince Pizzulli, Vice President Frank Fellone, Treasurer Steve Napolitano, Elizabeth Polizzi, Monica Polizzi, and former president Mary Ann Minucci succeeded in topping last year's event by \$6,000!

### Upcoming Christmas Party

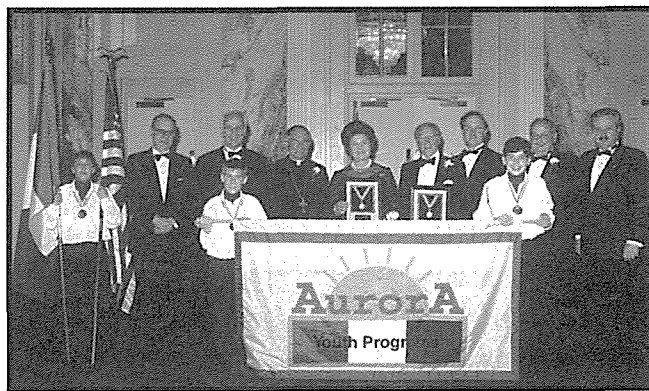
Our Annual Christmas Party is scheduled for the evening of December 20th at *Tiro A Segno* in Greenwich Village. There will be a sumptuous buffet, including dessert and drinks, plus a DJ for your enjoyment. Consider having your office party with us! Details will be mailed out soon., or call the office at (516) 488-7400.

### 12th Annual Gala at the Waldorf-Astoria

The dinner at the Waldorf was but one indicator of the great strides we have made in restoring our Institute. As in the past, this year's honorees were representative of the best of our community. They came from the fields of Medicine (**Dr. Dominick Purpura**, Dean of the Albert Einstein School of Medicine), Education (**Baroness Mariuccia Zerilli-Marimo`**, Founder of *Casa Italiana* at New York University), Government (**Mrs. Sonia Gandhi**, President of the Congress Party of India), the Arts (**Susan Sarandon**, acclaimed actress), and Law Enforcement (New York FBI Director **Lewis Schiliro**).



Honorees Baroness Mariuccia  
Zerilli-Marimo` (l) and  
Dr. Dominick Purpura (r)



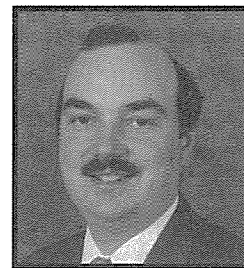
Aurora Flag Bearers with  
Honorees and Guests

### Family Picnic

The Plenary Council has revived the traditional picnic which was skipped last year. Vice President Frank Fellone and Social Chairman Nick Montesano mounted an all-out effort to re-establish it. As in past years, the picnic was held at the Platzl Brauhaus in Pomona, NY. More than two hundred people attended, and the weather was perfect. The major 50/50 raffle prizes were won by Sal DiGuardia of Melville, NY (\$250) and J. Colavita of Flemington, NJ (\$500). In a special drawing of the Family Boosters, a \$100 gift certificate to Rossini's Restaurant was won by Theodore H. Jacobsen of NY, NY.



Vice Pres. Frank Fellone

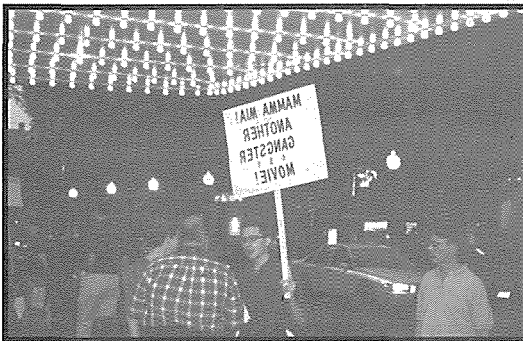


Social Chairman Nick Montesano

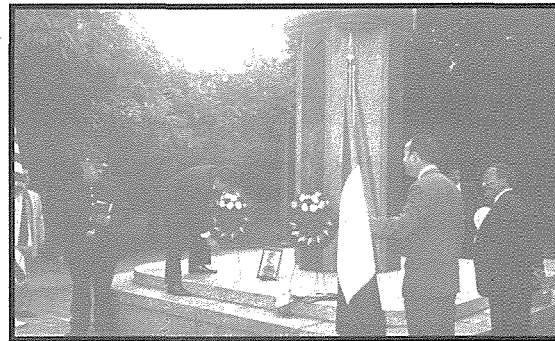
### Anti-Defamation

It has been a very active summer for our anti-defamation "shock troops." The *Sopranos*, *Summer of Sam*, *Mickey Blue Eyes*, and *Analyze This* have kept us hopping. We remember the 1959 television series *The Untouchables* which started the depiction of Italians as criminals on a regular basis, and compared to that year we consider this year to be *annus horribilissimus*.

In Chicago, ten of our members led by Bill Dal Cerro and law professor Michael Polelle took to the streets to picket *Mickey Blue Eyes*. They were quoted in the *Chicago Tribune* and given good exposure and a photo. Michael Polelle later did battle on a local radio talk show where he gave as good as he got. Bill has been writing opinion letters like crazy and had a great Op-Ed piece published in the *Los Angeles Times*. Here in New York, Rosario Iaconis (*Italic Way* Director) had an article against *Summer of Sam* published in *Newsday*. The article was later picked up by other Italian American periodicals. Our Institute recruited three other organizations to take out a half page ad in *Daily Variety* to protest *The Soprano's* Emmy Award nominations. We rained on their parade. (See the enclosed Image Building & Anti-Defamation Progress Report.)



**Chicago Institute Members  
Picketing *Mickey Blue Eyes***



**Ceremony at Statue of Garibaldi  
in Chicago**

The fact that our letters and articles are being accepted for publication in newspapers around the country tells us that non-Italians are beginning to question the avalanche of stereotypes pouring out of Hollywood. It seems that only a handful of Italian American filmmakers and actors want to keep this propaganda machine going for their own profit, none of which trickles down to the community. Our strategy is simple: keep the pressure on, mobilize our state and national politicians, educate the general public with ads and research studies. Our Institute was the very first to conduct a study of 1,000 movies made since 1928 and to publish our conclusions. The study, which was Bill DalCerro's brainchild and effort, is a sobering document that is beginning to reach the national press. We are pushing now for a study of how Hollywood propaganda affects Italian American youth. If, as we suspect, this propaganda has stunted the moral and intellectual growth of our community, it will be a powerful tool to make our case against the filmmakers.

### National Appeal

This year's appeal is quite urgent. Our Institute is making great strides on many fronts, from youth education to anti-defamation. We are asking for a minimum contribution of \$50 from those of you who believe in our struggle to create a new Italian millennium here in America. Moreover, we offer you a choice in how your money will be spent. In all cases, your money is fully tax deductible.

#### Recognition:

<b>Guardian of the Italian Heritage.....</b>	<b>\$1,000+</b>
<b>Benefactor to the Italic People.....</b>	<b>\$ 750+</b>
<b>Builder of Italic Pride.....</b>	<b>\$ 500+</b>
<b>Patron of the Italian Heritage.....</b>	<b>\$ 250+</b>
<b>Sustainer of the Institute.....</b>	<b>\$ 100+</b>
<b>Supporter of the Institute.....</b>	<b>\$ 50+</b>

Although we have only just launched our Year 2000 National Appeal, we would like to thank the following members and organizations for their early generosity:

#### Guardians of the Italian Heritage

Giuseppe Mazzini Lodge #137, OSIA (\$1,000)  
 Italian American Committee on Education (\$1,000)  
 Baroness Mariuccia Zerilli-Marimo' (\$1,000)

#### Benefactor to the Italian People

American Express Foundation (\$800)

#### Builder of Italic Pride

Comites Special Events (\$500)  
 Fieri Scholarship Fund (\$500)

#### Patron of Italian Heritage

Italian Club of Staten Island (\$300)

#### Sustainers of the Institute

Carmine Marinello (\$110)  
 Michael X. Mattone (\$150)  
 Michael J. Polelle (\$100)  
 Richard J. Vannucci (\$100)

#### Supporters of the Institute

Dominick & Diane Bianco (\$50)  
 Giovanni Cannone (\$50)  
 Charles J. Cerutti (\$50)  
 Piero M. DeLuise, MD (\$50)

**YES, I want to demonstrate my support of the Institute's mission. Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

Please use my tax-deductible donation as follows:

Aurora Youth Scholarships                       Italic Way Magazine                       Concert Band  
 Anti-Defamation (Project Italia)                       Office Technology                       All of the above

Make your check payable to: **Italic Studies Institute, P.O. Box 818, Floral Park, NY 11001**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

### **Aurora Expands Again**

Our unique pre-packaged Italian language program for 5th and 6th graders is expanding once more. If all goes well, we will have 16 classes, four more than last year (350 - 400 students). Much of the \$100,000 budget is coming from local legislators who have awakened to Italian as the gateway to all of the romance languages. *Aurora* not only preserves the cache` value of Italian but the program shows children of every ethnic origin how Western Civilization was created.

Let's be frank, our Institute is risking a great deal in this year's expansion. We are proceeding on promises of support. We did the same last year and felt the fiscal crunch. But our strategy is to keep the faith each year and to expand each year. If we can succeed in accomplishing that, *Aurora* will become a permanent program that will have the credibility to attract funding. Our own membership, through the National Appeal, kept the program afloat until outside funding arrived. Each of you is a builder of *Aurora*.

As usual, Aurora Director Tony DeNonno is spearheading the program, both the expansion and the funding. He is a dynamo. Also to be counted on are the Center Directors: Angelo and Rosa Merenda in the Bronx, and John and Maria Misso in Suffolk County. We also wish to thank Mary Ann DeTrizio, who succeeded in getting *Aurora* an \$800 grant from American Express (our first corporate grant), and our loyal and dedicated teaching staff in eight counties and boroughs.

Remember, Italians never lack the skill, courage, or will to win -- only the resources. Please help Aurora continue its success.

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