

# *The Founders' Log*

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Founders of the Italic Institute of America, 1987

Stefano Gristina

Carl Pescosolido  
(deceased)

John Mancini

## **A Message from the Chairman**

Dear Member,

Buon Anno!

This year will be our 17<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It will be a year full of many challenges. Needless to say, financial demands top the list. The search is on for a wealthy patron; as the Renaissance had its Medici family, we need to attract someone who understands our mission. Nevertheless, your Institute officers and staff, who work without pay, are motivated by a passion for our work. The next issue of *The Italic Way* has been laid out and *Aurora* is bouncing back with new grants. In addition to these activities, we have an election to hold.

Our president, Don Fiore, will update you on the *Shark Tale* issue. Suffice it to say that while we were the first to confront DreamWorks and to rally the major organizations, we have reached our financial limit. Many of you have responded to the National Appeal or given directly to the *Shark Tale* effort. But you can only imagine how resistant the media is to Italian American complaints and how reluctant our politicians and notables are to defend our children. We shall see if the major organizations will use their ample resources to achieve full mobilization of the community. Nothing less will win this battle.

I want to briefly point out to you the kind of folks who are operating your Institute. I have been in the business world for over 30 years, and non-profit world for 20 years, and I can honestly say that we have the most amazing group of dedicated and intelligent people I have ever come across. As you can imagine, dedication without intelligence or intelligence without dedication gets you nowhere. In folks like Bill Dal Cerro and Don Fiore in Chicago and Rosario Iaconis in New York and our newest Core Council member Renata Sdao, we have a formidable task force in the *Shark Tale* effort. Add to them our *pro bono* attorney, George Ricci, our political liaison Anthony Cardillo, our Advisory Chairman Alfred Cardone and you have a first-rate team unmatched by any other organization. All of them unpaid! There is one other that I have not yet mentioned.

As I write this message, an *Aurora* class is taking place in the next room (our office houses a classroom). I cannot describe the pleasure I feel listening to these 10- and 11-year-olds, mostly Italian Americans, speaking with pure Italian vowels and singing the *Aurora* song with such gusto. Our *Aurora* Director, Tony DeNonno, is not here with me because his job is to visit the other *Aurora* classes that are going on at the very same moment. Tony is the man who lobbies the politicians and Italian government for the grants that sustain *Aurora*. Even in this time of tightened budgets, Tony has been able to slowly squeeze just a little bit more money, enough to fund a class in Staten Island, maybe enough to reopen one in New Rochelle. How can you reward this kind of devotion and persistence? (For those of you who would like to see an *Aurora* class, we have a videotape made by Tony DeNonno, a professional filmmaker/producer. Call or write for a free copy.)

Got an old car you want to donate? The Institute has just enrolled in a program that converts your old car into cash for us, and a tax deduction for you. (See the details on a following page.)

Finally, our constitution requires an election of officers every two years. Candidates and voters must be members of the Core Council (not General members). You will find details on a following page. A nomination form will be mailed to members of the Core Council.

As you can see there is a lot of work ahead and, hopefully, satisfying results.

Warmest regards,

John Mancini

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## President's Message

As you're aware, the Institute launched a campaign to address the upcoming DreamWorks animated film, *Shark Tale*, back in September, 2003. Because the film unconscionably propagates Italian American mobster images to audiences that will be mostly made up of children, we were convinced that the issue deserved the active attention of the entire Italian American community, including its many organizations. In our "Call for Solidarity" message to the major groups, however, we stressed that a common strategy for full mobilization was paramount if we were to effectively meet this challenge.

Our words were well received. In January, NIAF, OSIA, and UNICO announced the formation of **The National Coalition Against Racial, Religious and Ethnic Stereotyping** (CARRES), supported by more than twenty Italian American organizations, as well as several from other ethnic and racial groups, with the specific purpose of tackling the *Shark Tale* issue. While the Institute was invited to join as a signatory to the coalition, we were excluded from its strategy planning core group, which has been restricted to the leadership of NIAF, OSIA, UNICO, and later, the Columbus Citizens Foundation. Needless to say, since IIA was the first to discover DreamWorks' plans, and the first to take action, we found the coalition's (as of yet unexplained) decision to restrict our participation to that of a passive signatory surprising.

What isn't surprising, but actually rather common knowledge, is that these major organizations certainly possess appreciable financial resources and manpower, which, if properly applied, should surely be sufficient to grab the attention of Spielberg and company. Further, Robert De Niro and Martin Scorsese, two of the principal voice-over players in *Shark Tale*, and Jack Valenti of the Motion Picture Association, have all been honorees at various NIAF affairs, and we think it reasonable to expect that such direct access should now be called into play.

In the interests of unity, we have decided to place the Institute among the coalition's "silent supporters." We will continue to watch the coalition's progress, and report to our membership whatever information its core group is prepared to share with us as the campaign continues.

I wish to thank those of you who have so promptly responded to our initial call for support in this very important matter.

Don Fiore

**DONATE YOUR CAR...or boat or stock or real estate...**

As fundraising becomes more of a challenge, the Institute is taking more advantage of its non-profit status. Recently, at the behest of member Catherine Gallagher, we opened up a brokerage account at JP Morgan/Chase. Catherine donated a number of Starbucks shares to open the account (so drink up!). We have now signed an agreement with the Vehicle Donation Processing Center in California to tap into the used car market. But, it's not just cars. You can get a tax deduction from jewelry, antiques, boats, and real estate. You will find a flyer enclosed that will answer all your questions.

So, always think of the Italic Institute when you need to dispose of property or securities.

**AURORA GRANTS & CLASSES**

Director Tony DeNonno has been working his usual magic in surviving financial hard times. The budget crises in New York State and New York City have eaten into the discretionary grants *Aurora* lives on. Our 2003-2004 classes dropped from sixteen last year to only four in November. However, your donations and some follow-up lobbying gave us enough commitments to add another three classes in January. This is why our politicians need to hear from us. Whether it's *Aurora Education* or the fight against *Shark Tale*, they need to be at our side. Italian Americans are way behind the other ethnic groups in utilizing their political resources.

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**NOMINATIONS**

Speaking of political power, this month marks our bi-annual election requirement. Those of you in the Core Council (as opposed to the General membership) have an opportunity to nominate yourself for a position on the Executive Council. Just fill out the nomination form you receive in the mail and send it back to us.

**NATIONAL APPEAL**

We would like to thank the following members and organizations for their donations:

**Special Friends of the Institute (\$5,000 +)**

Anonymous Donor  
Health Plus PHSP, Inc.  
Mr. & Mrs. John L. Mancini

**Guardians of the Italian Heritage (\$1,000 +)**

Catherine Gallagher

**Builders of Italic Pride (\$500 +)**

The Degmore Group  
Staten Island Rotary Foundation

**Patrons of Italian Heritage (\$250 +)**

Viola Cirio  
FIERI Brooklyn  
The Patronis Group  
Michael & Gloria Sica  
Carlo Simoni  
The Stauber Family Foundation

**Sustainers of the Institute (\$100 +)**

Charles J. Cerutti  
Joseph A. Crapotta, MD  
Dunwell Elevator Electrical Industries  
Maria Gloria  
Long Island Society of Italian Americans  
Gennaro Pupa  
Charles Sclafani  
Cesidio Tallini  
Charles Vesce, Jr.  
John Villanella

**Supporters of the Institute (\$50 +)**

- Janet & John Aquaro
- Alan C. Biondi
- Lawrence J. Caponegro
- Lina Cernigliaro
- Thomas DeGennaro
- Olga DeLuise
- Carmine DiLeo
- David A. Frigo
- David M. Gratta
- John T. Luna
- Dennis Mancini
- Marco & Wanda Savona
- Richard J. Vannucci

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**YES**, I want to demonstrate my support of the Institute’s mission.

\_\_\_\_ Enclosed is my donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_, payable to Italic Institute of America.

\_\_\_\_ Please charge to my American Express Card:

Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please mail to **Italic Institute of America, P.O. Box 818, Floral Park, NY 11002**

Your donation will be used to support *Aurora* Youth Scholarships, *The Italic Way* Magazine, and Anti-Defamation Activities (*Project Italia*).

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**NEW MEMBERS**

We welcome the following new members to the Institute:

Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Ali, Jr.	New Hyde Park, NY
Michael Baglivo	Brooklyn, NY
David Carrozzino, MD	Woodbury, NJ
Joy Casacio Nash	Doylestown, PA
Djino & Gina Celic	New Hyde Park, NY
Thomas DeGenaro	Millington, NJ
Mr. & Mrs. Mario Delsignore	New Hyde Park, NY
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph DeMartino	Floral Park, NY
Mr. & Mrs. David Diamond	New Hyde Park, NY
Mr. & Mrs. John Esposito	Floral Park, NY
Barbara Fincke	Garden City Park, NY
Mr. & Mrs. Frank Fiorello	Franklin Square, NY
Mr. & Mrs. Mario Karlovic	Floral Park, NY
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Lesar	New Hyde Park, NY
Michelle F. Manzella	Freehold, NJ
Elisa Mancuso	Bellerose, NY
Mr. & Mrs. James Polla	Northport, NY
Mr. & Mrs. James Rice	New Hyde Park, NY
Thomas Roti	Chicago, IL
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas J. Scala	Floral Park, NY
Mr. & Mrs. Ernest S. Sciutto	New York, NY
John Spidalieri	Port Orange, FL
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Thomas	New Hyde Park, NY
Frank Travisano	Waterbury, CT
Dr. Anthony Vaccari	Huntington, NY
Anthony Vecchione	Dumont, NJ

Looking for a unique gift that reflects your pride in your heritage?  
Call us at 516-488-7400 for a free copy of our  
***Project Italia*** gift catalog.

**FEBRUARY ALMANAC**

**Feb 1** – **Princess Stephanie** (nee Grimaldi) of Monaco is born in 1969.

**Feb 4** – The late English actress **Ida Lupino** is born in 1918.

**Feb 6** – Rock'n'Roll vocalist **Fabian Forte** is born in 1943.

-- **Aldus Manutius** dies in 1515. He published the first small “portable” books.

**Feb 11** – The long-standing dispute with the papacy over Rome is resolved when Premier **Benito Mussolini** signs the Lateran Accords establishing Vatican City in 1929.

**Feb 12** - Director **Franco Zeffereili** (*Romeo & Juliet, Tea with Mussolini, Jane Eyre*) is born in 1923.

**Feb 13** - English author **Raphael Sabatini** dies in 1950. Some of his works that become movies were: *Captain Blood, Against All Flags, The Black Swan, Scaramouche.*

**Feb 17** – Educator **Johann Pestolozzi** dies in 1827. His methods of classroom demonstration and participation became the basis of modern education.

**Feb 18** – **Victor Iannidinardo** is born in 1912. He established the first chain of co-ed health gyms in 1949, known as Vic Tanny Health Spas.

- Inventor of the first practical battery, **Alessandro Volta**, is born in 1745.

**Feb 19** – Franklin D. Roosevelt, fearing Axis sabotage, issued Executive Order 9066 in 1942 which forces some 10,000 **Italian Americans** from their homes and jobs along the Pacific coast and places restrictions on 600,000 Italian citizens across the United States. Four elderly Italian Americans commit suicide rather than endure the shame.

**Feb 20** – The last **Italian Army** peace keepers leave war-torn Beirut in 1984. Unlike the Americans, French, and British contingents, the Italians were not attacked by the warring factors. They are credited with evenhandedness and humanitarian conduct.

**Feb 24** – **Juan Domingo Peron** (nee Peroni) is elected president of Argentina in 1946.

- **Pope Gregory XVIII** had the calendar of Julius Caesar revised in 1582. Protestant England refused to adopt it until they realized how accurate it was.

**Feb 26** – Emperor **Napoleon Bonaparte** (nee Buonaparte) escaped from exile on the Italian island of Elba in 1815.

**Feb 27** – Tenor **Enrico Caruso** is born in Naples in 1873.

**Feb 28** -- Auto racer **Mario Andretti** is born in 1940.

**Feb 29** -- Opera composer **Giacchino Rossini** is born in 1792. His most famous overture was *The William Tell Overture* ( known to most people as the Lone Ranger Theme).

*Italic Institute of America, Inc.*

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