

The Founders' Log

No. 21

Published by the Italic Institute of America, Council of Governors

June 2004

Founders of the Italic Institute of America, 1987

Stefano Gristina

Carl Pescosolido
(deceased)

John Mancini

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Dear Member,

I am pleased to present your new officers for the term 2004 – 2006. Nominations were submitted by the Core Council members in March. An election was not necessary as the candidates reached their own consensus. However, as there were no takers for the office of Treasurer, I have appointed our southern California representative, Renata Sdao, to that post. Unlike most other organizations where officers follow a “stand-in-line” mentality that allows little creativity, your Institute officers are independent-minded members who appreciate innovation. Moreover, each is well grounded in Italian and Italian American history. Each fully embraces the Institute’s mission.

Rosario Iaconis
President

William Dal Cerro
Vice President

Alfred Cardone
Financial Secretary

Renata Sdao
Treasurer

And what was the first order of business for the new Executive Council? They took to the streets protesting the Tribeca Film Festival's presentation of *Shark Tale*, that anti-Italic DreamWorks animation targeted to children. A brief description of events follows on another page. The long and the short of it is that only your Institute took any real action against this kiddie propaganda. Other groups planned to attend the presentation to ask DreamWorks embarrassing questions. Their plan fizzled. DreamWorks was not about to spoil the propaganda fest with a Q & A. The lesson: we cannot be gentlemen in dealing with mega-million dollar Hollywood sleaze artists. If you want to fight *Shark Tale*, you need to support the action-oriented Italic Institute.

Our next offensive is a mass petition drive aimed at the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA). These are the folks who give a movie its rating. *Shark Tale* is ethnic profiling and does not deserve a rating of G (General Audience) nor PG/PG-13 (Parental Guidance). Imagine if *Shark Tale* is left with an NC-17 or R? It's the difference between *Finding Nemo* (G) and *Fritz the Cat* (R). You will find a petition form enclosed. I urge you to fill a sheet with 25 signatures from friends, family, clubs, co-workers. We are asking the major organizations to join us in this grass-roots offensive.

We have received our first vehicle donations. As they say, one man's junk is another man's gold. Member James Rice donated a boat and member Vincent J. Maggi donated a car, which translated into a tax-deduction for them and operating funds for the Institute. Keep those cars and boats coming, and real estate too! Check out our website (italic.org) for donation information.

Another way to help your Institute is to bring in new members. You must know someone -- a friend or a relative -- who is tired of the old immigrant mentality and wants to really learn about being Italic. Another way is to upgrade your own membership to the Core Council. Which reminds me, I know we owe you another issue of *The Italic Way* (XXXIII) but *Shark Tale* and cash flow problems have delayed it.

Good wishes to all of you. Enjoy the summer and do your part in defeating *Shark Tale*.

Warmest regards,

John Mancini

Italic Institute of America

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Italians of America, unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains of derision -- and much to gain with solidarity, dignity and ethnic cohesion.

The Italic Institute of America is dedicated to creating a can-do climate of political, social and educational activism. This entails a synergistic strategy that fuses ideology and inspiration with media penetration. Though the IIA has made significant strides in cultivating and penetrating the mainstream media, more needs to be done. To that end, the Institute is crafting a "kitchen cabinet" of significant benefactors to reinvigorate our revenue stream. This will allow the IIA to become the authoritative voice and the conscience of the Italian-American community.

If the topic is *italianita`*, the Italian-American community will promulgate the positive and eschew the negative. According to the 2000 census, we number 16 million strong. Yet how many count themselves as Caesar's heirs? What is their understanding of modern Italy?

Shrouded in shame and wrapped in the mantle of assimilation, too many Italians have convinced themselves that ignorance is acceptance. But embracing one's Americanness does not mean rejecting one's Italianness. Indeed, we must redouble our efforts to eradicate the dumbed-down, capo-buffoon persona so favored by the media.

That's why your membership is pivotal to the survival and success of our mission.

As President of the Italic Institute of America, I pledge to preserve, protect and defend both the majesty and the continuity of our culture. But I'll need your support to continue all the educational, media and anti-defamation projects that are necessary to achieve our rightful place in society. Hispanics, Jews, even Arab-Americans have learned to *carpe diem* -- seize the day. Historically, Italian Americans have failed to do so. Indeed, they have not been able to sustain a full-throttle, no-holds-barred campaign on behalf of a most noble heritage.

Our goal is to **energize** the Italo-American community by looking back to the future. In order to become a sinewy, politically-influential ethnicity, we must remember our Italian destiny as envisioned in Virgil's *Aeneid*:

To set no boundaries in time or space -- and no end to our accomplishments.

Rosario A. Iaconis

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members to the Institute:

Claudia Albano	Kensington, CA
S. Michael Apollo	Lynbrook, NY
Adele Assante Carlson	Barrington, RI
Frank L. Coconate	Chicago, IL
Mario B. Ignagni	Roseville, MN
Franco Paliferro	Stone Park, IL
Carlo Vaniglia	Chicago Ridge, IL

SHARK TALE PETITION

The Italic Institute has gone on record from the first hour that the defeat of DreamWorks requires the FULL mobilization of the community. But, what could have been a groundswell of indignation has come down to Horatio at the Bridge, your Institute fighting the Hollywood steamroller with only cunning and imagination, and very little money. Most of our politicians ignore us. Those famous Italian Americans whom we elected and supported over the years, the former political elite, the hotshot businessmen and the fabulously wealthy treat our appeals as junk mail. And frankly, we are sadly disappointed in the half-hearted campaign the major Italian American organizations are waging. It now comes down to the rank and file. The Institute has written to the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) the film industry's rating mechanism. If *Shark Tale* can be denied a G and PG/PG-13 it will inform the American public that this animation is NOT suitable for anyone under the age of 18. It could cause a financial disaster for DreamWorks. Ratings are determined by an audience of parents selected from different geographical areas. *Shark Tale* is expected to be rated in late summer for an October 1st release. The Italic Institute has documented our case against *Shark Tale* based upon its inappropriate ethnic profiling. The First Amendment does NOT protect Hollywood propagandists when their lies are targeted to children. Ethnic stereotyping is just as much an issue as sex and violence when minors are involved. So what needs to be done is to demonstrate the resolve of the Italic community by submitting petitions. It will only cost us a little time. Involve your family, friends, clubs and co-workers. The enclosed petition form needs only 25 signatures. The Institute membership alone can generate thousands of names if every member does his/her duty. Return completed petitions to us.

MANY WAYS TO GIVE

Buddy, can you spare a boat? Or a car? Or some stock? Actually, giving a tax-deductible donation can take many forms. Of course there is the old reliable check payable to the Italic Institute, a money order, an American Express charge, a vehicle donation, a transfer of stocks or bonds to our brokerage account. But the granddaddy of all is the Living Trust. Make a sizable tax-deductible donation, cash or real estate, and you ALSO derive monthly income from it while you live. A trust cannot only give you a tax benefit and monthly income but you can avoid paying any capital gains tax on real estate or stock transactions. The remainder reverts to the Institute when heaven calls. How better to guarantee that your beloved heritage stays alive and well here on planet Earth. Call us for details at 516.488.7400.

MEMORIAL DONATION

The Institute gratefully acknowledges a generous donation from Mr. & Mrs. Erasmo G. Mitrano in memory of Margaret Mancini, mother of Chairman John Mancini.

TRIBECA FILM FESTIVAL PROTEST

Performing Arts Center at the Tribeca Film Festival in Manhattan where DreamWorks SKG presented a sneak preview of scenes from *Shark Tale*, a new children's animation to be released on October 1st. The film can best be described as "*The Sopranos Meets Nemo*"

President Rosario A. Iaconis of the Italic Institute of America presents documentation against *Shark Tale*. Leonardo Da Vinci (Lionel Bottari) with his bodyguard (Franco Paliferro) also unveiled *The Last Sucker*, a satirical cartoon lampooning DreamWorks chief Steven Spielberg and *Shark Tale* stars Robert DeNiro and Martin Scorsese

Leonardo, Bill Dal Cerro (Vice President of the Italic Institute) and a Swiss Guard pass out protest packets to families waiting to see the *Shark Tale* presentation.

Institute officers Rosario A. Iaconis, President (l.); John Mancini, Chairman (c.); and Bill Dal Cerro, Vice President (r.)

Leonardo and his bodyguard pass out free copies of his latest masterpiece *The Last Sucker* to people on the *Shark Tale* ticket line. Many movie-goers brought the cartoon and accompanying *Shark Tale* protest literature into the theater and read them, to the consternation of the DreamWorks staff and stars, including Robert De Niro

In its continuing struggle against the DreamWorks animated film *Shark Tale*, leaders of the Italic Institute of America took to the sidewalks of New York with a unique information campaign on May 2nd. Their target was a special preview of clips from the multi-million dollar children's animated cartoon. The plot of the film revolves around an Italian American shark "mafia" that controls an undersea world. Voiceovers are performed by Martin Scorsese, Robert DeNiro and some cast members of *The Sopranos*.

Having cleared the protest with local police, the Institute flew in three of its Chicago members, two of whom were decked out as Leonardo DaVinci and his Swiss bodyguard. DaVinci, played by Lionel Bottari, unveiled his latest full color painting, *The Last Sucker*, a satirical gathering of all the "goombahs" who have earned a living defaming Italian American culture. Included in the grouping were DeNiro, Scorsese and Steven Spielberg. Copies of the painting and a packet of press clipping documenting the Institute's 8-month campaign against the film were passed out to Tribeca pedestrians and movie-goers.

Although no outside media chose to cover this protest, nearly every family waiting in line to see the *Shark Tale* preview received a packet and cartoon. Because there were no trash bins on the way into the theater, hundreds of packets were carried into the theater by the audience. As there was a half hour delay in the start of the show, the audience began reading the packets. *The Last Sucker* and the *Shark Tale* packet could be seen everywhere in the audience as people whiled away the minutes waiting for show time. The head of Tribeca security, Lou Palumbo, was so disturbed by the proliferation of cartoons that he ordered the Institute's chairman, John Mancini, who was in the audience, to stop distributing the troublesome hand-outs. When he was told that distribution took place outside the theater he was nonplussed. It seems that DeNiro and other cast members were in the theater at the time and, no doubt, saw the sea of cartoons around them.

As for the *Shark Tale* clips, the characters were unmistakably Italian American. Names like Lino, Luca, Frankie and Lenny all came with the usual cultural baggage. The speech patterns, the vocabulary (*fuggetaboutit*, *capeesch*, *agita*, *badda bing*) stereotyped all the "bad guys" as "Italians." The actors and director manipulated the children in the audience to participate in a simulated movie production.

When completed in October with promotional toys and video games and after release on DVD, *Shark Tale* will represent the most comprehensive ethnic defamation ever aimed at American children. In this day and age of political correctness, it is an appalling escalation of anti-Italic bias.

ZINNI AND GANDHI WERE HERE FIRST

The Italic Institute has always prided itself on being ahead of the curve. For those of you who keep up with world news, you know that former Marine general Anthony Zinni is making his voice heard concerning the Iraq War. In India, Italian-born Sonia Maino Gandhi is now the power behind the ruling coalition. Both of these alpha personalities were honored by your Institute back in 1998 with its special Silver Medallion Award. We clearly see the big picture well before others do.

NATIONAL APPEAL

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

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

HealthPlus PHSP, Inc.
Mr. & Mrs. John L. Mancini
New York State Department of Education

John M. Fiore, M.D.
Maria Gloria
Long Island Soc. Of Italian Americans
Gennaro Pupa
James E. Sciutto
Soc. For Italian Culture of Long Island
Salvatore Spano
Cesidio Tallini
Richard Vannucci
John Villanella

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

Cellini Charitable Foundation (OSIA)
Catherine Gallagher
North Bronx Westchester
Neighborhood Restoration Assn.

Builders of Italic Pride (\$500 +)

Viola Cirio
The Degmor Group
Carlo & Anne Simoni
Staten Island Rotary Foundation

Supporters of the Institute (\$50 +)

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Andrew F. Minerva
Marco & Wanda Savona
Charles Sclafani

Patrons of Italian Heritage (\$250 +)

Michael & Gloria Sica
The Stauber Family Foundation

Sustainers of the Institute (\$100 +)

Joel L. Catania
Charles J. Cerutti
Joseph A. Crapotta, MD
Thomas DeGenaro
Olga DeLuise
Dunwell Elevator Electrical Industries

Vehicle /Boat Donation

Vincent J. Maggi
James Rice

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*).

UPGRADE YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Since our founding in 1987 there have been two levels of membership: General and Core Council. Core is derived from the Latin *cor* or Italian *cuore* (heart). Core membership is for people who wish greater participation in the Italic Institute, to be closer to the inner workings. So, Core members can nominate and vote and also serve as committeemen, officers and directors. But truthfully, these benefits have appealed to only a few people. To attract more Core members we have revamped the benefits package. Effective immediately, the Executive Council has added the following benefits to Core membership:

Email service: Add your email address to our CoreChain list. We will link you to all the news we get from around the world and other organizations. You will also receive timely news and reports from our Executive Council and Program Directors. The CoreChain also allows you to ask us questions and to make suggestions.

Library: Our staff will research your questions in our 1,000-volume library. A lesser number of books and videos will be available for your home use but you can have access to any information you require.

Free classified ads: Got something to sell or offer? Core members will be allocated classified space in our newsletters and magazine at no charge.

Free Reprints: Reprints of past magazine articles are free for Core members.

Become a Rep: Qualify as an Institute regional representative or committee chairman and we will enhance your status with official IIA business cards, a listing on our stationery and special cash discounts.

Convert your membership now and we will discount your dues for the first year: pay \$75 instead of \$150.

Italic Institute of America, Inc.

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