



April, 2008  
No. 30

# The Officers' Log

Day One for the restored *Aurora* Heritage class in West Hempstead, Long Island. These youngsters will be eligible for the Advanced level after completing this 12-week Introductory course.



## Class Restored

Aurora took a major hit this year in Nassau County with the loss of a state grant. Our State Senator Balboni resigned abruptly to head up the State's Homeland Security Office. Nevertheless, with donations received from our Core members Steve & Lisa Napolitano and Steve Aiello, we were able to restore our traditional class at the Rectory of St. Thomas the Apostle Church in West Hempstead.

The class filled quickly with twenty-five 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders from local neighborhoods. Veteran *Aurora* teacher Mary Bruschi welcomed the class into the *Aurora* system. Students who complete this course will go on to the Advanced course held in nearby Garden City Park (at the Cellini Lodge, OSIA). Our thanks go out to all those who worked together to restore this class. It demonstrates how the Italian American community can transform itself from an aging culture to a youthful one.

**AURORA**  
is the  
**Gift of Heritage**  
to the  
**Young**

## Grants Awarded to Aurora

New York City Council Member James Vacca has been underwriting an *Aurora* class in the Bronx ever since he was elected. Many of his constituents have sent their children to our Introductory course (12 lessons) and have been asking for an Advanced course. That course is still under development in Nassau County on Long Island and is not available elsewhere in the *Aurora* system.

To make an Advanced course a reality in his district, Mr. Vacca has awarded the Italic Institute a \$5,000 grant to complete development. These funds will allow us to create new history cartoons, games and other teaching materials. We hope to complete development by this June and open an Advanced class in Mr. Vacca's district next fall. Beside the course itself, there is a

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## New Council Leaders

Nominations by members of the Core Council have resulted in a new slate of officers for 2008-2010. The names are all familiar because they have been chosen by consensus.

The Treasurer and Executive Director are appointed by the Council of Governors.

The Italic Institute is governed by four interlocking Councils (Governor, Core, Executive, Advisory) and an independent Financial Secretary.

### Executive Council

President – Bill DalCerro  
Vice President – Tony Vecchione  
Treasurer – Rosario A. Iaconis

### Financial Secretary

Alfred Cardone

### Executive Director

John L. Mancini

### Council of Governors

Chairman - John L. Mancini  
Vice Chairman (Midwest) – Don Fiore  
Vice Chairman (East) – Rosario A. Iaconis  
Special Counsel – George P. Ricci

## DUES RISE

For the first time in twenty-one years, General Membership dues will increase from \$20 to \$25, effective April 1<sup>st</sup>. Core Council dues will remain at \$150.

## YES! I share the values of the Italic Institute.

\_\_\_\_ Enroll me as a member (\$25 check enclosed)  
\_\_\_\_ Enclosed is a donation (tax deductible) of \$\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

**Italic Institute of America**

**PO Box 818**

**Floral Park, NY 11002**

**Tel: (516) 488-7400 Fax: (516) 488-4889**

**Email: ItalicOne@aol.com Website: Italic.org**



**John L. Mancini, Chairman, Council of Governors**

## A TEAM WITH A DREAM

I congratulate the new leaders of the Executive Council and wish them *auguri!* Although an Italian dictionary will define this word as “good wishes” (the word inauguration carries that meaning), it shares the same Latin root as augment, “to increase.” It is our hope that the new Executive Council will expand our Institute and make it stronger.

For twenty-one years the Italic Institute has been building an infrastructure for the community. With the launching of our *Aurora Heritage Programs*, *Project Italia Productions* and *The Italic Way Magazine*, we created a strong foundation to preserve the classical Italian heritage and prepare succeeding generations of children to bear our unparalleled legacy. Over those years some 4,000 children have taken the *Aurora* Saturday morning heritage course; we have produced three major videos for PBS broadcast; and our national magazine has set the standard for original historical and cultural research.

It has been twenty-one years of progress tinged with much frustration. In all those years, we failed to gain the support of the major Italian American organizations. It certainly wasn't for lack of trying. Letters were written, calls were made, grant applications submitted, testimonials and referrals offered and joint efforts against defamation were undertaken. Nevertheless, with annual gross revenues exceeding \$14 million, the leaders of the major organizations have chosen to omit our programs from their largesse. Yet, our experience with many individuals and chapters of these organizations, such as Cellini Lodge, Sons of Italy on Long Island, gives us hope that our message is being heard.

It is our belief that Italian Americans have gone badly astray from their Classical roots. It is not a pretty picture but it goes a long way in explaining why our heritage hasn't risen above food and mafia lore in the past forty years. Clearly, our individual talents and pride have brought us great success but our soul is in perilous straits. We can only hope that the future augurs well and that all the groups will insure the future of our august heritage.

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## SUSTAINING THE CAUSE

The Institute gratefully thanks the following recent donors:

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

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

Cellini Lodge, Order Sons of Italy in America  
New York City (Councilmen Domenic Recchia & James Vacca)  
New York State (Sen. Marty Golden)  
New York State (Sen. Jeffrey Klein)

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

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

New York State (Assemblyman Michael Benedetto)

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

Olga DeLuise  
John G. Villanella

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

Mr. & Mrs. S. Michael Apollo  
Rev. Thomas G. Arminio  
Anthony C. Bottone, MD  
Mario Ignagni

#### Friends of the Institute (\$25 +)

John Dabbene  
L.T. Maresco



Anthony Vecchione, Vice President, Executive Council

It is indeed an honor to serve as the Vice President of the Italic Institute of America. What a privilege it is to work with colleagues who are devoted to the noble cause of preserving the heritage and legacy of the Italic culture.

For more than 2,000 years, the sons and daughters of Italia have enriched cultures from Asia to North America. Their contributions to the arts and sciences, education, medicine and literature are endless.

Yet here in America, where the Italian hand from colonial times helped create a new democratic society based on Roman law, fought in its many wars, and contributed in myriad ways to the rich American cultural tapestry, the children of Columbus are still waging a war against two insidious stereotypes. More than 150 years after mass immigration from Southern Italy, Italian-Americans still face an identity crisis. Although they have become fully assimilated as European Americans, thanks to the media, they are still trapped in ethnic limbo.

Although they've reached the heights of business, politics, the military, medicine, and law, Italian-Americans are still portrayed as hyphenated Americans in the movies, on television and in popular literature.

Even more disturbing is the gangster stereotype, thanks to an obsession by the mainstream media with the Mafia culture -- a widespread obsession that has somehow eluded the family values police. That old canard of "it's just entertainment" just doesn't fly anymore.

The Italic Institute of America is dedicated to setting the record straight about what it means to be an Italian-American. Through the *Aurora* program, Italian-American children learn about the classical Roman culture, the Renaissance, as well as the true legacy of the Italian contribution to American society. I look forward to working with our new President Bill DalCerro and the other executive officers.

For you, our members, I urge you to spread the word about IIA and how we stand alone in our mission to preserve the rich Italic culture for our children and grandchildren for generations to come. \*\*\*\*



Bill Dal Cerro, President, Executive Council

I would first like to congratulate my fellow officers. I couldn't ask for a more dedicated and passionate team. Together, we will strive to carry on the standards of intelligence, integrity and *italianita`*.

Secondly, I want to commend you, the IIA membership, for your support. It is a great honor to represent people who, to use the current phrase, "get it."

Advancing a sense of Italic pride in the 21<sup>st</sup> century isn't just an economic issue but a philosophical one. That is what makes the IIA such a *rara avis* within the national Italian American community.

Once upon a time, our parents' and grandparents' organizations served two very useful purposes. The first was social, that is, helping new immigrants adjust to a strange new land via jobs, housing, schooling, health care and over-all hospitality. Once that objective was achieved, the second one became assimilation—in short, an all-consuming need to prove to our fellow Americans that we were on par with them socially, patriotically and economically. The second goal succeeded with a vengeance: our children and grandchildren are middle-class, we've served honorably in every major war and we contribute millions of dollars to charitable (usually non-Italian related) causes. Italians are now an accepted part of the American mosaic.

Politically and culturally, however, we still have goals to reach. It doesn't matter how much money you have in any society if you lose your ethnic soul or if your over-all culture is misrepresented in the mainstream. As an educator, I am more than a little stunned that newly arriving immigrant students from Asia, Latin America, Africa and Eastern Europe see my Italian surname and immediately refer to me as "the Godfather teacher." That is their only reference point via Italic culture.

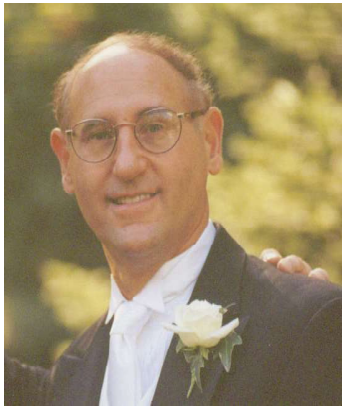
"Change" is the new buzzword in this year's presidential race but the IIA has been calling for change for two decades.

Since its inception in 1987, the IIA has targeted two

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## New Officers, from p.1



George P. Ricci  
Special Counsel  
Council of Governors



Rosario A. Iaconis  
Vice Chair (East)  
Council of Governors



Don Fiore  
Vice Chair (Midwest)  
Council of Governors



Alfred Cardone  
Financial Secretary

## Grants, from p.1

need to expand our teaching staff and to train current teachers in the Advanced techniques. In Nassau County 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders are already offered 24 weeks of *Aurora*. The Vacca grant will give us the boost we need in the other counties.

New York State Assemblywoman Ann Margaret Carrozza has come to our rescue in the borough of Queens. The heavily Italian American section of Whitestone was without an Introductory course this season due to the loss of a New York City grant. Once again, members of the community spoke up and Assemblywoman Carrozza has committed to funding two classes this fall.

Back in the Bronx, we graduated 31 students from a class taught by Loretta Zaino and her daughter Tiffany. The ceremony attracted all the parents, crowding the school cafeteria with almost 100 people. Taking a cue from a popular TV show, some of the parents insisted on competing with the 5<sup>th</sup> graders in our *Mille Miglia* (Thousand Miles) road race game. The Jeopardy-style game is based on *Aurora* subjects so the 5<sup>th</sup> graders had all the advantages. State Senator Jeffrey Klein and State Assemblyman Michael Benedetto, both of whom underwrite the class, were on hand to greet students and parents.

## President, from p.3

groups who are tailor-made agents for change: children and the media. Through its unique *Aurora* Heritage Program, pre-teens from all backgrounds learn *Italic* history, language and culture in a fun and interactive environment.

As for the media, the IIA uses its national magazine, *The Italic Way*, to challenge the distortions of *Italic* culture which continue unabated even in the Internet age. And dedicated readers, whether first-timers or seasoned subscribers, continue to be educated about the depth and breadth of our Classical culture and its achievements, not only in America but around the world.

As President, I will continue to make *Aurora* and *The Italic Way* the standard bearers for change in how the vast majority of our fellow Italians, as well as our fellow Americans, see our heritage. We've already gotten the "American" part down pat. There is nothing more to prove. We now have to show people that the "Italian" part—which has been a vibrant force in making America a great nation—needs to be properly represented as well.

Indeed, throughout the centuries, from classical Rome to the founding of America, the *Italic* people have always been agents for change. *Avanti!*

## RAFFLE TIME!

- You will notice a raffle book enclosed with this newsletter.
- Ticket donations for the benefit of the *Aurora* Program are
- \$5 each or 6 for \$25. **First prize is \$500, second prize is**
- **\$250, third prize is \$150, and fourth prize is \$100.** The
- drawing will be held on April 12, 2008 at the West Hempstead
- *Aurora* Heritage class. The winner need not be present. Mail
- the ticket stubs and check to: *Italic* Institute of America, P.O.
- Box 818, Floral Park, NY 11002, or use the enclosed envelope.

## The Italic Way, an Addendum

If you have received your new issue of our magazine and you read about the remains of an Italian American soldier of the First World War being returned home (World Notes), add this sidebar:

France's last WW I vet died in March at age 110. He happened to be an Italian named Lazare Ponticelli. He saw action at Verdun and was later drafted into the Italian Army fighting in the Alps where he was wounded in the face. He became a French citizen in 1939. He once observed, "War is completely stupid."

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