



# The Officers' Log

## HITLER'S FIRST DEFEAT

July 25<sup>th</sup> will mark the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of a remarkable but conveniently forgotten blow to Adolph Hitler's march of conquest that culminated in the Second World War and the Jewish Holocaust.

The whole story of July 25, 1934 will be revealed in the coming issue of *The Italic Way* (No. XXXV). Briefly, Austrian Nazis murdered that country's anti-Nazi chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss and planned to deliver their



Hitler's first non-German victim was the Italian ally and anti-Nazi leader of Austria, Engelbert Dollfuss.

nation to the Third Reich. This was to be Nazi Germany's first act of aggression, a little more than one year after Hitler became German chancellor, before he marched troops into the Rhineland and before Munich. While France and Britain dithered, the Italian government under Mussolini took swift action. Four army divisions were sent to the Italo-Austrian border and Hitler was told to keep his hands off Austria. Hitler backed off and Austria remained free.

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## WHY CRIME FAMILY?

The Italic Institute is making its second attempt to persuade the FBI and the U.S. Dept of Justice to drop the word "family" from its description of Italian American gangs. Loaded monikers like the Genovese "Crime Family" make our criminal class sound like cultural brethren rather than the thieves and murderers they are. In fact, Italian Americans are the only ethnics who are saddled with such homey appellations. Hispanics and blacks have their gangs, Columbians have cartels, everyone else is categorized as a mob, syndicate, enterprise, operation or conspiracy. Even the Judeo-Russian mob calls itself the *mafia* or *organizatya*.

A number of years ago when we petitioned the FBI, we received a multi-page letter claiming that wire taps of Metro New York's "Five Families(sic)" revealed that the thugs referred to their gangs as families. And as we know, canary Joe Valachi revealed in the early 1960s that the phrase *La Cosa Nostra* was another favorite description. The FBI then dropped the word Mafia (after Italian American protests) and began using LCN to describe Italic gangs. Maybe the time has come to drop the family stuff, too.

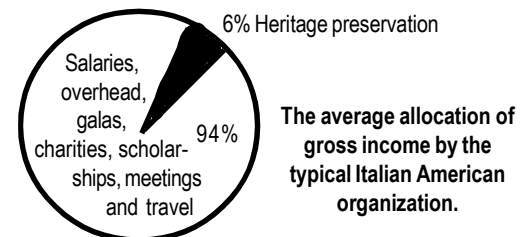
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## GOVS DISCUSS MISSION STATEMENTS

How do you get the major Italian American groups to live up to their mission statements? This is the question currently before our Council of Governors. As reported in the last issue of *The Italic Way*, the major organizations use a paltry 6% of their gross income for the preservation and promotion of the Italian heritage. This amounts to less than \$800,000 of some \$14 million. The bulk of their funds goes to overhead, general scholarships and medical charities.

"Scholarships to study Marketing or English do not preserve 2,500 years of heritage," says Governor Don Fiore. "Italian American concert bands, as an example, are disappearing. Not a nickel of support comes from the major organizations."

Chairman John Mancini adds, "Heritage training for kids is vital for our survival.



Parents can't do this alone. The major organizations have a vested interest in preparing new generations."

The question the governors are debating is whether the major organizations are

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# SUSTAINING THE CAUSE

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

John L. Mancini  
New York City (Councilman James Vacca) (07-08)

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

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New York City (Councilman Vincent Gentile) (07-08)  
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## Ellis Island is a nice place to visit. But our spirit shouldn't be buried there.

There may be 16 to 20 million Italian Americans, but there are only a handful of Italic people. If you know someone who believes in the Classical Italian Heritage and reveres the unequalled accomplishments of our ancestors in Italy and in America, please have them join us.

\_\_\_\_ Enroll me as a member (\$50 check enclosed)

\_\_\_\_ Enclosed is a tax-deductible donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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# PRES. HONORED

Last month, our National President, Bill Dal Cerro, was honored by the Grand Lodge of Illinois (Order Sons of Italy) with its Leonardo da Vinci Award. Bill was lauded for his achievements in Education.

These achievements included his work as a reporter for *Fra Noi Newspaper*, an Midwest Italian American monthly, his creation of an educational website (www.stereotypethis.com), his groundbreaking work in the Institute's PBS documentary *And They Came to America*, and currently his new book, a long-overdue tribute to Italian Americans in Jazz. Bill has managed to do all of this while working full-time as a suburban high school teacher and carrying out his duties as an officer of the Italic Institute.



Considering that three of the greatest educators in the world were Italic – Vittorino da Feltre, Johann Pestolozzi and Maria Montessori – Bill is in good company. *Auguri!*

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## **HITLER**, from p.1

This episode rarely makes the history books but continues to gum up the traditional lessons of the 1930s. Our Institute has been urging a reexamination of the pre-war years. But like psychoanalysis, few historians or academics wish to delve into a past that may cause more anxieties. Fascist Italy is comfortably consigned to the trash heap of history. Nevertheless, a growing number of authors are piercing the veil of parochial history.

In our quest for academic inquiry, we have gone to a number of local universities. The most recent was Fordham University, where a media-hyped symposium on *The Sopranos* was staged. No amount of coaxing could get Fordham to consider our more academic-appropriate subject. Before that, we approached Stony Brook University, and recently Seton Hall University in New Jersey. Neither would touch the subject.

Could Italy have been an ally instead of an enemy? Could the 1930s have been the poster child for collective security instead of appeasement? Was the Holocaust preventable? These and other questions will remain taboo so long as academia keeps the wraps on this crucial decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

# NEW JERSEY'S IMAGE: An Italian Problem

By Anthony Vecchione, Vice President

A recent *New York Times* review of the Bravo Channel's *The Real Housewives of New Jersey* had this to say, "Two years after *The Sopranos* said its goodbyes, Jersey style is back on television. . . The. . . *Housewives* franchise. . . has finally hit emotional pay dirt with five big-gestured, big-hearted Italian-American women." Clearly, by "Jersey style," the reviewer refers to fictional Italian American sociopaths or real life Jersey girl *cafoni*.

Anyone who has tuned into *Housewives* is immediately thrust into the gaudy, material world of Italians-gone-wild. It exists, just like upper crust Princeton or lower crust Newark. But in the middle class New Jersey where I grew up, loud-mouthed and self-indulgent narcissists weren't considered "Jersey style."

What does come to mind are women who are pillars of their communities, hardworking women who are dedicated to their families, their careers, their marriages, their faith, and most of all, their children. I know this because some of these women were in my own family.

When I think about Italian-American women from New Jersey I think about Marie Garibaldi, the first woman to be appointed to the New Jersey Supreme Court. I think about Major Marie (Rossi) Cayton, from Oradell, New Jersey, who was killed in northern Saudi Arabia during Desert Storm flying a CH-47D Chinook cargo helicopter delivering supplies to combat units.

Perhaps the creators of *Housewives* were looking for *The Sopranos* style rather than the Jersey Style. The Bravo Channel sought out Italian-American women who possess a personality type and lifestyle that represent a marginal number of women of Italian ancestry that reside in the Garden State. Italian-American women who don't mimic television characters and who possess positive values need not apply.

Thousands of Italian-American women from Franklin Lakes, New Jersey, which is where the *Housewives* characters reside, are just normal Americans. They are homemakers, lawyers, teachers, pharmacists, and church elders.

New Jersey has become a state of ill-repute -- from Jimmy Hoffa's alleged burial place (by the way, he wasn't Italian) in the Meadowlands and the ubiquitous Guidette images in the movies (*Jersey Girls*) to *The Sopranos*. Yet, the common denominator is the Italians. The media see New Jersey as a bottomless pit of Italian stereotypes, with the unflagging cooperation of money-grubbing Italian American filmmakers and actors. It was in New Jersey that David Chase held his auditions for *The Sopranos*, attracting 14,000 gangster wannabees who thought they achieved the sole requirement "to look Italian."

# AURORA PLANS

The Institute is planning to restart the *Aurora Heritage Program* exclusively in Nassau County, Long Island, this fall. Although we broke continuity last year with the unanticipated suspension of NYS grants, our office will reach out to previous students so they may continue to the next level. In addition, a new module is being designed for students in their early teens. If fully realized, *Aurora* will offer students a heritage course for each year of their youth, from age 11 thru 13. By comparison, Greek American children spend six years in Greek School.

If you wish to help us build *Aurora*, send your donation (marked *Aurora*) to IIA, PO Box 818, Floral Park, NY 11002.



*Aurora* may return this fall as a 3-stage heritage program.

# LATIN AWARDS

Not for nothing do we call ourselves the Italic Institute. Italic was the original name of the Italian people and is the linguistic family name for Latin and the Romance languages. Romance, by the way, means Roman, not amorous. (English is considered part of the Germanic Family.)

To maintain the Italian connection to Latin, we instituted high school Latin awards many years ago. High scoring students receive our bronze medallion commemorating the first unification of Italy and a \$25 cash prize. This year's winners were:

**Alex N. Taylor** (Chaminade H.S., Mineola, NY), **Elizabeth Gurskis** (Garden City H.S., Garden City, NY), **Katherine Klaric** (Sacred Heart Academy, Hempstead, NY), and **Nilay Shah** (The Wheatley School, Old Westbury, NY).

Please note that these winners are probably all non-Italian, as in most years. How many Italian American students are even taking Latin, their ancestral tongue?

I would like to suggest that the Bravo Channel consider producing a movie about the life of Major (Rossi) Cayton, or Marie Garibaldi. But they won't. When it comes to portraying actual Italian-American women, fair and balance is a concept as foreign to these executives as the *The Real Housewives of New Jersey* is to millions of us. \*\*\*\*



## NEW ISSUE COMING

A new issue of *The Italic Way* (No. XXXV) is being assembled for your summer reading. As you can see from the draft cover, left, our focus will be on the Fiat-Chrysler deal (“Italians To The Rescue”). It will include a history of the giant automaker, founded twenty-six years before Chrysler.

Among the other stories in the works are: an Italic perspective on the Madoff crime; how Italy first became a nation; the never-celebrated 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Hitler’s first defeat (see a summary on page 1), and the little known story of Roman Emperor Constantine, known as the “13<sup>th</sup> Apostle.”

You can help put *The Italic Way* on a better financial footing by bringing in new members and taking a small ad. We will accept business card sized ads for \$50. The ad can pay tribute to your family, in memory of a loved one, or it can be an advertisement for your business. Think of it as a building block for the Institute.

Your mini-ad will begin with these words: “This page is sponsored by . . . .” You can add “in memory of \_\_\_\_\_” or any acknowledgement you want.

Big-ticket advertising is harder to come by these days. Nevertheless,

magazines lose half their content when big-ticket ads use up precious pages. We’ll still seek full page ads for our inside and back covers but we want to experiment with mini-ads.

Just send us a business card or write the dedication you want and we will do the computer set-up. Enclose your check for \$50 payable to Italic Institute of America and mail everything to Italic Institute, PO Box 818, Floral Park, NY 11002.

### Crime Family, from p.1

Using the word “family” feeds into Italian stereotypes and links these syndicates to our subculture. Technically, how many of these criminals are actually related to each other or are even Italic these days? John Gotti was head of the Genovese Family(sic) but used the Irish American Westies Gang for his hatchet work. Is that an Italian crime family?

There is no question that the incessant use of the term family has added a nail to our cultural coffin. Robert MacNeil’s landmark book *The Story of English* said it best:

*“Now treated as synonymous with organized crime (which it is not), the Mafia has added terms like godfather, the family, and capo to the language....The fact that these words – in the minds of many – now come with Italian accents, is to do with the power of the media not the Mafia.”* [Page 258]

We are hoping that the new African American Attorney General, Eric Holder, will be sensitive to our plea. We copied Speaker Nancy Pelosi and our local Congresswoman, Carolyn McCarthy, for added emphasis. Phone calls to these public servants will follow. \*\*\*\*

### Governors, from p.1

complying with their IRS mission statements. Governor Rosario Iaconis suggests, “Is giving money for medical research or parochial education what you were founded for? Look at the case of Princeton University and Brandeis. Both were accused of violating mission statements. It cost Princeton \$100 million to settle.”

The governors cite the Institute’s 2002 *Gianelli Report* that gauged the progress of the community. The *Report* found an alarming degradation of the heritage both in the media and among the Italian American population. Observes Mancini, “It is no accident that the Italian heritage is fully in the hands of filmmakers and Mafia devotees. Entire generations of children were allowed to grow up with little else.”

The governors concede that questioning mission statements is unheard of in our community, but it is very much a concern of state and federal regulators. Observes Governor George Ricci who is also an attorney, “Charitable foundations are created with specific goals. Raising money from the public requires that you spend it for the mission you stated in your corporate filing.” \*\*\*\*