



Jan-Feb, 2010
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The Officers' Log

HAITI RESCUE

The Italians have sent the aircraft carrier Cavour to Haiti, equipped with an on-board hospital, 100 vehicles and construction equipment, 20 aircraft and generators enough to provide electricity for 6,000 homes.

The Cavour stopped in Brazil to pick up a medical staff prior to reaching Port Au Prince, Haiti.



The Cavour entered service last June and is named for Camillo Benso, Count of Cavour, architect of Italy's reunification in 1859-1870.

The Italian government also earmarked €5.7 million for Haitian relief and will forgive Haitian debt of €40 million. It has also offered to dispatch a force of Carabinieri to maintain order. ****

CRIME FAMILIES

We are pleased to announce that New York Senator Chuck Schumer has signed on to our Crime Families initiative with a letter to U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder. The Senator endorses our call for the Dept. of Justice to

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WHOSE SPECIAL DAY IS IT?

The Italian consulate in New York has mobilized the local Italian American institutions to participate in a European initiative called *Il Giorno della Memoria* (Day of Remembrance) to be held every January 27th.. The day is meant to atone for the Jewish Holocaust.

While we laud the nations of Germany, France and Italy for their act of atonement, we ask why the Italian American Community needs to be involved? Our Community was in the forefront of the fight against the Axis powers. Hundreds of thousands of our fathers, uncles and

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DUES MONTH

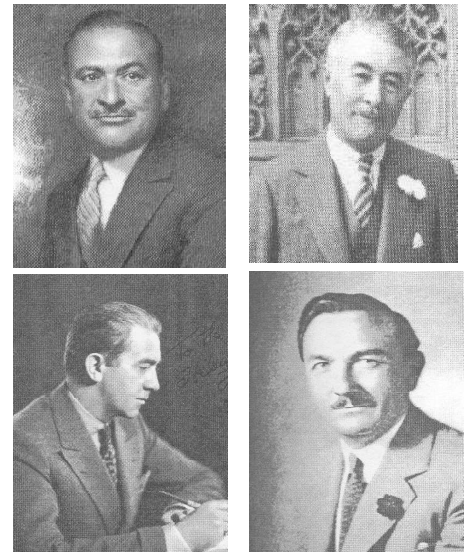
January is Dues Month. Don't wait for an invoice in the mail because we have eliminated such waste. The Italic Institute operates lean and mean. We prefer putting our time and energy into heritage. There is so much to be done, as you can see from our reports in this *Log*. We are volunteers but the struggle costs money.

For \$50 you can help us carry on the fight. Use the envelope to continue your support. ****

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LA CASA SALE QUESTIONED

Eighteen descendants of the Paterno family have joined the Italic Institute in requesting the Attorney General of New York State to review the 1990 sale of La Casa Italiana to the Italian Republic. The six-story building was erected in Manhattan and donated by their grandparents to Columbia University in 1927. It was meant "...to promote the educational and spiritual uplift of Italians in America." [Guglielmo Marconi, 12 October 1927]. This gift was sold to the Italian government with the mission of offering "...a privileged view of Europe to America..." [Maristella Lorch, 4 February 1994]



(top) Joseph & Charles Paterno, (bottom) Michael Paterno and Anthony Campagna. They donated a building worth \$15 million to Columbia University on behalf of Italian Americans. Columbia sold it without family consent.

The Paterno family also wants to know the whereabouts of the 18,000-volume Paterno Library that was specially leather-bound in Rome and housed in the building. It was carted away by Columbia officials at the

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Crime Families, from p. 1

cease using the term “crime family” in describing Italian American crime syndicates.

We still have a long way to go with this initiative but it is necessary to disengage thieves and murderers from our cultural legacy. The media justifies its use of the term by quoting the Dept. of Justice –FBI. We need to stop the smear from the top down. *****

SUSTAINING THE CAUSE

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

American Society of the Italian Legions of Merit
Cellini Charitable Foundation
Elizabeth Paterno Barratt-Brown

Sustainers of the Institute (\$100 +)

Maria Gloria
John & Rita Mancini

Supporters of the Institute (\$50 +)

S. Michael Apollo
George DiScala
John M. Fiore
Charles Scalfani

Friends of the Institute (\$25 +)

Rosa Giglia
Richard Nicastro

Shouldn't There Be More to the Italian Heritage Than Galas?

Of course there is! But, you need to link up with the right people. Broaden and deepen your knowledge of the Italian heritage. Let us show you the difference between the Classical Italian Heritage and the superficial version.

We are the Alternative.

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

___ Enclosed is a tax-deductible donation 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

JERSEY SHORE MAKES WAVES

by Anthony Vecchione

I have been monitoring the MTV reality show *Jersey Shore* and the Italian American opposition to it. While the show is bad enough it has brought to light problems within our community that go deeper than defamation.

Jersey Shore spotlights a small segment of young Italian-Americans who share a beach house. These real people embrace a lifestyle that glorifies tanned and fit bodies, alcohol and sex. Some academics have elevated the style to a “Guido/Guidette Culture.” One could make the argument that this particular lifestyle among hormone-driven teenagers is hardly unique to Italian-Americans. They could be any group of hedonistic Americans, but the “Italian” slant evokes more laughter and better ratings. The show has also resulted in a goldmine of material for comedians and late night talk show hosts. The roommates have appeared on *Saturday Night Live* where they reenacted a zany Nativity scene at Christmas and they’ve been flown to Burbank to parade their embarrassing ignorance on the *Jay Leno Show*.

Leading the opposition to *Jersey Shore* is UNICO, a national Italian American service organization with heavy membership in New Jersey. It’s current president Andre Di Mino has taken to the cable and airwaves to have the show cancelled. But while three sponsors have pulled out, the show just completed its season without interruption. Plans are in the works for another season but the “stars” are holding out for more money.

To varying degrees, UNICO had the support of other organizations, including our Institute. But what is disturbing and all too common lately is the role of Italian American academics. Rather than join in condemning ethnic defamation, one taxpayer-supported group, the Calandra Institute at the City University of New York, has sought to treat “guidoism” as a “subculture.” A special colloquy on the subject was held with a Professor Donald Tricarico, author of the essay “*Guido: Fashioning an Italian American Youth Culture*.” Tricarico defines the “Guido Culture” as “a dynamic, adaptive expression of non-traditional ethnicity.” What the majority of our community would call immature or “cafone,” Prof. Tricarico labels “non-traditional.”

One freethinking Italo on the internet, Arturo Piccolo, has taken Prof. Tricarico to task. He counters that the term Guido is akin to a mafia fad, but also infers Italian buffoonery, immaturity, wasted lives, ignorance, hanging-out, stupid hair styles and comical clothing. >>>

AP TEST MAY BE SAVED

For over a year the Italian American community and the Italian government have been scrambling to save the Advanced Placement Tests for Italian language. These exams are associated with special courses in high schools around the country that earn students college credits. The tests were launched in May, 2006 with 1,592 students taking the exams. The College Board, which created the tests, accepted a promise by certain Italian American leaders that by 2009 some 10,000 students would be taking the test. In fact, the figure rose only to 2,282 students. With such a shortfall the College Board wanted nothing more to do with the Italian AP. It demanded the community front all the costs if they wanted to keep its AP alive. The minimum cost is \$3 million to cover three years.

To raise this money the Conference of Presidents of the Major Italian American Organizations successfully lobbied the new Italian Ambassador Giulio Terzi for a matching grant of \$500,000 per year and is now securing pledges from its member organizations for the other half (\$1.5 million for years 2010-2012). In February we will know if the AP tests will be restored this year.

Assuming that all pledges are kept over the next three years, two problems remain: how to entice more students to take AP Italian and how to satisfy the College Board's long-range goal to fully computerize the tests. Such an upgrade is estimated to be as high as \$3 million.

The Italic Institute still believes that financing the AP only solves half the problem. The 800-pound gorilla in the room is how to find thousands of additional students. For that, Italian American children must be mobilized through heritage programs like *Aurora*. (See the adjacent column.) *****

Piccolo also lashes out at Fred Gardaphe, a professor of Italian American Studies at Calandra. Piccolo cites Gardaphe's December 12, 2009 *Time Magazine* interview wherein he is quoted as saying: "Guido itself is not a derogatory name. It's a real handsome, uneducated kid who gets by on his charm and his looks and doesn't really have much going for him." [That's not derogatory?] Piccolo accuses Tricarico, Gardaphe and others of being "traitors for a few pieces of silver thrown at them for pissing on their own community."

To put *Jersey Shore* into perspective, I recall a couple of examples of how other ethnic groups dealt with their television image.

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A HERITAGE SYSTEM

by John Mancini, Chairman

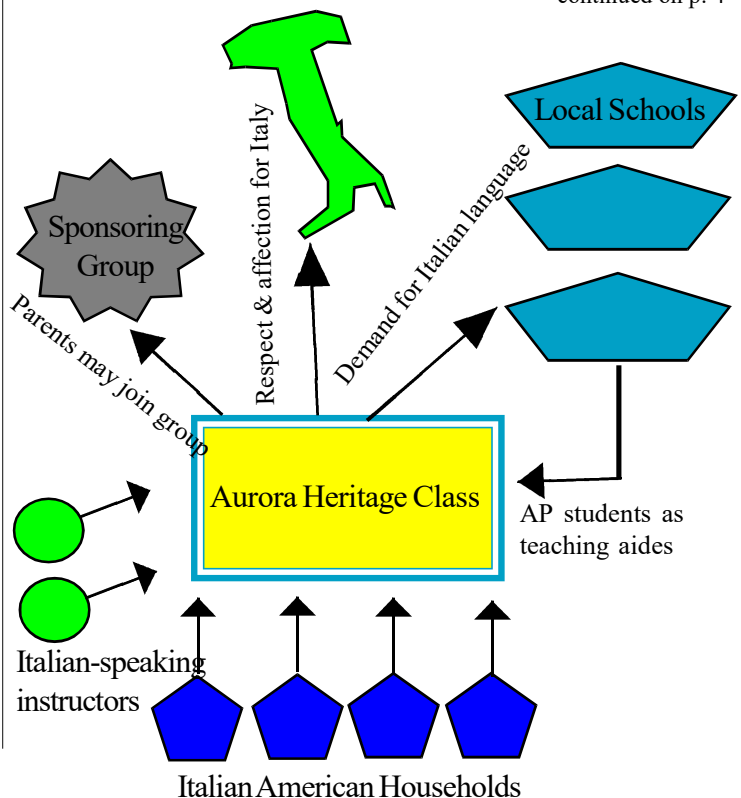
It is difficult to explain how an "Italian School" would reverse the downward spiral of our community, so I have literally drawn you a picture. The pictorial below is neither a fantasy nor some sort of Madoff scheme. It is an actual representation of how our *Aurora Heritage Program* currently functions in the real world. It may look complex but it is quite simple and logical. Let's walk through it.

The center of our universe is the Saturday morning classroom filled with eager youngsters of varying Italian backgrounds. Their parents have come to realize that *Aurora* is an opportunity they never had – a chance for their offspring to learn Italian (rather than family dialect or perhaps Spanish) and to broaden their understanding of Italy and its history.

Aurora differs from most other Italian classes because it costs parents a lot less money — \$50 vs \$300 for 24 classes. Moreover, their children are introduced to history, Latin and English derivations (example: dormitory from *dormire*). And unlike other language courses, *Aurora* has a classical mission – a well-rounded student, steeped in heritage.

Compare the pictorial to the scholarship system that is the mainstay of our community. Scholarships are simply a cash transaction, handing cash to a student of Italian lineage to study whatever he or she wants. Heritage (blood) is merely a genetic requirement. The transaction begins and ends at the presentation

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DO YOU KNOW?

- The Irish government is giving \$3.5 million toward an **Irish Arts Center** in Manhattan. New York City will kick in \$7.75 million.
- The **Chinese** may have given us gunpowder but they never accepted our Roman alphabet. Chinese government computers can only read 32,000 of the 55,000 Chinese characters. Consequently, if you have an uncommon name the government can't issue you an identity card. Thus far, 60 million citizens must change their names to fit the system. That's more than the population of Italy!
- The Chicago Public Schools has received \$2.5 million in federal and state grants to expand its **Arabic language** program. Some 2,000 students are enrolled in Arabic.
- A recent appeal by **Boys' Town of Italy** informs the public that its "citizens" come from Ethiopia, Romania, Albania, Afghanistan and other war-torn areas of the globe. The image of the poor Italian waif is a thing of the past at Boys' Town though it is still its logo.
- There is a new book out by James Bradley, author of *Flags of Our Fathers* (Iwo Jima) titled **Imperial Cruise**. It's about things they never taught you in American history. It should be required reading. We hope to do a review of it soon.

Remembrance

from p.1
grandfathers served in the American armed forces, many paying the ultimate price, in defeating anti-Semitism during the Second World War.

We also ask why the New York consulates of France and Germany and their *landsmen* in America have not emulated the Italian

Republic with a comparable program? The French Consul General paid a short visit to a Jewish center and mentioned the Holocaust. The Germans had a joint musical concert with the Jewish Community. Are the Italians going a bit too far?

Doesn't the Italian American community have enough image problems without joining Italians in a guilt trip? Columbus is already demonized as an ethnic cleanser. In addition, Hollywood portrays us as America's premier racists and criminals and buffoons. How much can we carry? ****

Jersey Shore

from p.3
In 2003, CBS cancelled a reality show *The Real Beverly Hillbillies* based on the popular 1960s sitcom *The Beverly Hillbillies*. Pressure from Georgia Senator Zell Miller, the Center for Rural Strategies, an advocacy group, and a massive media campaign condemning the program as nothing more than a vehicle to perpetuate stereotypes of southerners as uneducated "hicks" was too much for CBS to handle.

CBS caved in once again when the Congressional Black Caucus complained about a demeaning characterization of an African-American football player elected to Congress in the show that was titled *Mr. Dugan*. The program, which was to star Cleavon Little, never aired.

Not since *The Sopranos* has a program like *Jersey Shore* brought so much press coverage to New Jersey and its Italian-American citizens. But unlike *The Real Beverly Hillbillies* where condemnation of the program was virtually universal among southern and rural Americans, *Jersey Shore* has exposed a schism in the Italian-American community.

It has its roots in the film *The Godfather*. We have learned that our community is divided quite distinctly between loyalty to "the arts" or to "the community." Our filmmakers, actors and now our academics are squarely on the side of "the arts." By inflating an adolescent fad into a "sub culture" and ignoring the reality of defamation, many of our academics have shown that the community is clearly not their priority. ****

Heritage

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ceremony. Recently, I was astonished to learn that the Generoso Pope Foundation in Westchester County, New York, funds just one (1) scholarship winner each year to the tune of \$50,000. Candidates must be at least half Italian. (This year's winner plans to pursue biology and mathematics.) In *Aurora* terms, this is the dollar equivalent of 12 classes with a total enrollment of 240 students.

Heritage training is not just about learning the *Tarantella* or reciting the days of the week. It is a multi-faceted gift. Offering parents an inexpensive method and inspiring teachers are prerequisites to success. But the rewards are reciprocal and extend well into the future.

Casa

from p. 1
closing.

A further erosion of the Italian American presence wrought by the sell-off can be seen in the make-up of the governing board. These are the Columbia-appointed trustees of La Casa Italiana: **David Freedberg** (Executive Director), **Jonathan Cole** (Guarantor), **Jane Ginsburg** (Guarantor), **Ira Katznelson** (Guarantor), **Edward Mendelson** (Guarantor), **Nicholas Turro** (Guarantor), **Daniele Bodini** (Guarantor –Italian-born).

Our initiative to question Columbia University echoes similar actions, with successful outcomes, by donor families at other universities. ****