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The Officers' Log



AN INCOMPLETE STORY

The Executive Council is both puzzled and saddened by the N.Y. Museum of Jewish Heritage's failure to recognize Italian efforts to rescue Jews—both before and during the Holocaust. [Museum is pictured above.]

While a number of books and films have documented Italy's life-saving role in the Holocaust, the museum mostly overlooks it in its various exhibits. This was first noted and reported to us by long-time Institute member Joseph Graziose. Although not Jewish, Graziose became a member of the museum. As such, he wrote a letter to a museum official requesting a more complete portrayal of Italy. The official claimed to have forwarded Graziose's letter to the museum board. Graziose has yet to receive a reply.

The Museum of Jewish Heritage was created in 1986 with federal and state taxpayer money as well as Jewish philanthropy. Then-Governor Mario Cuomo and then-Senator Alfonse D'Amato were among the founding fathers of the museum. The museum is a regular attraction for multi-ethnic school groups

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AP MAGIC?

The Columbus Citizens Foundation recently pledged \$500,000 to Dr. Margaret Cuomo's campaign to restore the lapsed Italian Language Advanced Placement tests. This is the single largest amount the CCF ever donated for the Italian heritage. Was it a coincidence that the donation was made while the CCF is answering charges bought by the Italic Institute at New York's Charities Bureau? Sources tell us that the CCF is "very concerned" that their reputation and charitable standing are being investigated. We can further report that Dr. Cuomo took full advantage of the Italic Institute's attack on the CCF to lobby its Board of Trustees for the donation. Prior to this, the CCF was as evasive as the other major

Was it a coincidence?

organizations in stepping up to the plate, despite having a former CCF president on Dr. Cuomo's team.

As to the other groups, NIAF has now converted its "matching pledge" offer to a real donation of \$500,000, but OSIA is still promising only \$50,000. Dr. Cuomo's goal for the Italian American community is \$1.5 million to match an equal amount by the Italian government. Technically, \$225,000 still needs to be raised to match the Italian government and

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PELOSI: A HARD SELL

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi is quite attuned to the Jewish Community. Her grandchildren are Jewish and she is an open participant of AIPAC (American Israeli Public Action Committee).

Unfortunately, her ties to the Italian community are nostalgic at best. She recently appeared at a Sons of Italy gala for the usual photo-ops. She has done little of substance for our community. She routinely ignores our letters and calls for help with the "crime families" issue. Granted, the Speaker of the House is a busy position and she technically only represents a small portion of San Francisco. Yet, we are not asking for money or her vote in Congress. We are merely asking for a letter from her to Dept. of Justice Secretary Eric Holder requesting that his department, which includes the FBI, discontinue using the term "crime family" to single out Italian American criminal enterprises. Senator Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and Rep. Carolyn McCarthy (D-NY)

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SUSTAINING THE CAUSE

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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)

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NEW ITALIC WAY

Issue XXXVI of *The Italic Way* is in the works. It promises to be a real eye-opener. No other Italian American periodical has the depth or range of *The Italic Way*. From ancient history to current events, we give readers a well-rounded taste of their complex heritage. *The Italic Way* has been the sole champion of the classical Italian movement for 20 years. Support this movement with an ad.

Card-size.....\$50
¼ page.....\$250
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LATIN AWARDS

Each year, our Institute reaches out to local Long Island high school graduates who excel in Latin or Italian. It is generally unknown, even among academics, that Latin is part of the Italic Language Family, as are Spanish and French. In our efforts to restore the Italian classical heritage it is necessary to keep Latin within our range of activities.

This year's awards, a bronze medallion and \$25 gift went to Philip Bradley Sidoti of Chaminade H.S., John D'Antonio of Garden City H.S., Kenneth Krihely of Wheatley School., and Victoria Ciampo of Sacred Heart Academy, pictured here (r.) with Ms Anne Ciriello of the Language Department.



FIAT RETURNS

Last year FIAT bought controlling interest in Chrysler Corp. This year it will set up 200 new dealerships in the U.S. The outlets will be located at existing Chrysler dealerships selling the super-economical FIAT 500. Electric 500s will come in 2012.

Kokomo, IN, got the good news that FIAT will manufacture transmissions for the FIAT 500 in that city. Unfortunately, the rest of the automobile will be assembled in Mexico.

CORRECTION

In the last Log we reported that John Cuneo of Grayslake, IL, donated a family estate of 31,000 acres to Loyola University. Actually, the land measures 91 acres. The homestead is 31,000 square feet.



OPINION

**An Interview
with
Vice Chairman
Rosario A.
Iaconis**

LOG: How do you judge the current state of the Italian American community?

RAI: In a word: Deplorable. Where do I begin? Having absorbed the slings and arrows of outrageous media depictions, our so-called community remains the same indolent, timorous bunch that allowed *The Godfather*, a lurid fictional melodrama, to metamorphose into a socially sanctioned stereotype.

LOG: Is this why the Institute is pressuring the Columbus Citizens Foundation?

RAI: Our Institute is challenging the CCF to live up to the Foundation’s original mission of promoting our Italian heritage – and stop frittering away funds on peripheral projects and parochial schools that do not even offer Italian as a foreign language. Also, we want to persuade the CCF to underwrite groups (the IIA comes to mind) that are spearheading a cultural renaissance.

LOG: Is there also a problem with Italian American academics who embrace mafia movies as great art?

RAI: A pox on all their houses of mafia-movie worship! Can you imagine any self-respecting African-American academic instructor, film critic or journalist gushing breathlessly about the cinematic sweep, nuanced performances and artistic splendor of *The Birth of A Nation*? At this juncture, in the interests of full disclosure, I must reveal a bit of my *curriculum vitae*. In addition to serving as a Vice Chairman of the IIA, I am a longtime professor of Macroeconomics, Microeconomics, and Critical Thinking. So when academic Fred Gardaphe uses his professorial perch to laud *The Godfather* as a story of Italian-American immigration, I reach for my Roman *gladio* – rhetorically speaking, of course.

LOG: Is mainstream America being honest in claiming that we overreact to negative media?

RAI: Actually, *schadenfreude* accounts for the appeal of such

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POLITICIAN BOWS OUT

The Institute’s local state assemblyman, Thomas Alfano, is calling it quits after 14 years. Alfano was the subject of some scrutiny by our Institute for his anti-Italic policies. The Assemblyman did not have the courtesy to respond to letters or calls from us, even after Vice Chairman Rosario Iaconis met him at a Chamber of Commerce gathering.

When an irate letter from us eventually elicited a response from Alfano’s staff, we were told that the Assemblyman did not provide state grants to private sector organizations. Grants were given solely to public entities such as public schools and municipalities. We later discovered that Alfano had given a \$40,000 New York State grant to Young Israel, a private Orthodox school in a neighboring Jewish community.

Not only had we caught Alfano in a lie but further investigation revealed that Young Israel has a national lobbying effort to subvert U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East. In short, Young Israel is against an independent Palestinian state, the basic tenet of our nation’s goal for peace in that region. Moreover, the grant was given despite New York’s dire \$9 billion budgetary crisis. Alfano’s grant was part of a whopping \$11.4 million of taxpayer money given to New York’s Jewish community. Ironically, Alfano boasted of establishing a new website to monitor government waste.

The Institute wrote to Alfano advising him of his hypocrisy and poor judgement. A press release was also sent to local media. Whether our revelations affected Alfano’s decision not to run for reelection cannot be determined. “As a general rule, Italian American politicians who pander to other groups turn out to be ordinary political hacks,” observes Chairman John Mancini.

ITALIAN RAINBOW

The United Nations reports that 7% of the Italian population is foreign-born. That would be nearly 4 million people and growing. That is probably without counting the illegal residents. Meanwhile, Italy’s native population is dropping due to a low birthrate.

By comparison, the foreign-born population is 10% in the UK, 13% in Germany, 14% in Spain and the U.S., 20% in Ireland, 21% in Canada and 23% in Switzerland.

As the song says, “*The Times They Are A Changin’*.”****

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benighted fare as *The Godfather, Jersey Shore* and the Mario Brothers video games. America revels in the twisted notion that Italians – though they are overwhelmingly professional and entrepreneurial – still personify a supremely *déclassé* underclass.

LOG: But everybody loves Italians, right?

RAI: Everybody loves Italians as America’s favorite *untermenshen*.

LOG: How is Italy faring in reality and the media?

RAI: Its economy has weathered the global financial meltdown better than the U.S., Britain, France, or Spain. Italian joblessness is lower than the unemployment rate in Germany, France, or the U.S. In the past decade, Rome has begun to flex its considerable geopolitical muscle in Europe and the Middle East. Nevertheless, the media continue to depict the Magic Boot as a hardscrabble and irredeemably corrupt nation of utter irrelevance.

LOG: Why?

RAI: Sadly, Italians – both here and in our ancestral homeland – inflict the most grievous wounds on themselves. Though Italy has severely crippled organized crime – *Camorra, Mafia* and *Ndrangheta* combined – via several massive high-profile blitzkrieg arrests and incarcerations, Roberto Saviano (author of *Gomorrah*) creates the impression that the Mob lurks everywhere. Our stateside compatriots can also be downright ill-informed.

LOG: Has Premier Berlusconi been a positive leader?

RAI: For all his peccadilloes, real and imagined, Silvio Berlusconi has restored a sense of stability in government. Yes, he must contend with the odious Umberto Bossi of the *Lega Nord* (the separatist Northern League). And even Gianfranco

Fini, the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies, has crossed swords with *il Cavaliere* (“The Knight,” Berlusconi’s nickname).

LOG: Is Italy headed for a split? Will Bossi’s notion of *‘Padania’* become a nation?

RAI: Italy’s regional frictions are far less serious than those afflicting Spain, Belgium, Britain or Germany. In the name of Italian unity, allow me to quote the aforementioned Fini: “*La Padania? Mai esistita.*” (“It never existed.”) Oh, and “*Viva l’Italia.*” *****

Incomplete, from p. 1

in the Metro New York area and receives over \$100,000 each year from New York State to cover operating costs.

Institute Vice President Anthony Vecchione feels that the museum needs to promote and showcase the positive role Italians played in helping their Jewish brethren. He says, “Each January 27th, the Italian embassy, its consulates and most Italian American institutes publicly atone for the transgressions of Fascist Italy. The museum of Jewish Heritage should be a place where the great humanity of the Italian people is documented and where Italian resistance to Nazi policies is emphasized.”

The last issue of *The Italic Way* documented how Italy single-handedly prevented Hitler’s annexation of Austria in 1934, saving Austrian Jews from four years of Nazi persecution. “It’s not even a footnote at the museum,” claims Vecchione.

Institute President Bill Dal Cerro will pursue ideas with his Executive Council in approaching the Museum. Says Dal Cerro, “Italy’s record must be made complete.” *****

AP Tests, from p. 1

pay the College Board for a 3-year cycle of AP tests. Perhaps the Italic Institute helped bring the CCF to the table.

It was not our intent to force the Columbus Citizens Foundation to fund the AP tests. Our governors and officers still believe that the tests will be an endless drain on community resources. Dr. Cuomo may have reaped the benefit of “unintended consequences.” She, like the leadership of all the major Italian American organizations, does not believe in after-school youth education like the *Aurora Heritage Program*. She has written us quite frankly on the subject. But she has yet to explain how demand for the AP will be created in high schools around the nation. The College Board dropped Italian because it failed to reach a minimum number of student takers. It was always about students, not money.

For the Italian government and community leaders, the AP test is a status symbol. What they fail to grasp is what the Greeks, Asians and Jews learned as immigrants – acculturate your children first, status will follow. *****

Pelosi, from p. 1

have provided such letters for us.

We recently informed the Speaker that the State of Florida will soon delete the word “shylock” from all statutes. This was a Jewish initiative. Are Italian Americans chopped liver? Our initiative affects the image of 16 million Americans of Italian descent, the fifth largest ethnic group in the nation. This is our message to Speaker Pelosi:

Ms. Pelosi, you are the highest Italian American official in the United States. You are the culmination of twenty generations of American discovery, blood and sweat by the Italic people. Your grandchildren may be Jewish but they are also half Italian. You owe them, as well as our grandchildren, a heritage free of bias. *****