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The Officers' Log

AURORA SHELVED

It is with some bitterness that we announce the termination of all *Aurora Heritage Courses*. The reason, as always, is lack of funding. The refusal by the major organizations and by the Italian government to contribute to Aurora leaves us no other choice. For many years the program was financed by public grants. Under former Director Tony DeNonno, *Aurora* had as many as 14 sites in operation. Some 4,000 pre-teens passed through the unique blend of Italian language, history and culture. The Great Recession cut off public funding.

“There was never a tradition among our people,” stated Executive Director John



Mancini, “to send children to ‘Italian School,’ like the Greeks and Jews have. *Aurora* was supposed to change that.”

While there will always be scattered Italian language classes for youngsters around the country, they are neither standardized nor as comprehensive as *Aurora*. The *Aurora Heritage Program* had a good run for 23 years.

AP: PLAYING GAMES

Make no mistake. Thus far, not a penny has been given to the College Board to restore the Italian Language



Advanced Placement tests. The tests were launched in 2006 with \$500,000. They lapsed in 2009, because not enough high school students signed up for Italian classes. The College Board now wants \$3 million to restore the tests for three years. After that, student enrollment will determine their future. Some organizations are now scrambling for cover.

Is NIAF, the National Italian American Foundation, playing games with its commitment to AP funding? In the space of three months, the Washington DC non-profit first claimed it was pledging \$500,000 as

NEW HORIZONS

Officers of the Institute will convene in New York by year’s end to discuss how to adapt to the cultural and financial realities of the 21st Century. Among the areas to be explored will be new methods in dealing with the media the internet and the young. Also on the agenda will be how to reverse the academic and organizational policies that are wasting our resources.

With the mothballing of our *Aurora Heritage Program* (see left column) it has become

**“Few voices protest
the waste...”**

apparent that a classical agenda has little chance of succeeding in the current cultural climate. The major organizations continue to divert vast resources to social welfare rather than to heritage needs.

“Community leaders still see their role as agents of assimilation rather than guardians of heritage,” observes Vice Chairman Don Fiore. “Scholarships are relics from a much earlier era when the chief goal was assimilation and acceptance by Anglo society. They do absolutely nothing in the way of passing on the heritage. They only produce another crop of graduates that happens to have Italian surnames. Sending kids to Italy is a better investment.”

The Italic Institute is currently a membership organization with mandated programs such

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SUSTAINING THE CAUSE

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

Carmen J. Finestra In Memory of Robert Dini

Sustainers of the Institute (\$100 +)

Wanda & Jack Rogers In Memory of Ada B. Gatta
Charles Sclafani

Supporters of the Institute (\$50 +)

Gennaro Pupa

Romulus & Remus or Uncle Remus?

Some people don't know the difference. Do you know someone who needs heritage awakening? Give them a membership in the Italic Institute.

We are the Alternative!

_____ Enroll the person below 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

THE ITALIC WAY

Issue XXXVI of *The Italic Way* -- spearhead of the classical Italian movement -- is in the works. Take an ad now:

Card-size.....\$50 ¾ page.....\$550
¼ page.....\$250 Full-page....\$650
½ page\$400

AP Tests, from p. 1

a "matching" grant. Then, the Foundation claimed the half-million dollars was an outright grant. As of this writing, NIAF is pledging only \$250,000 as a "matching" grant. Matching means that it will match whatever its own members give, up to \$250,000. The Sons of Italy (OSIA) has promised only a \$75,000 "match." You would need some really generous members in either case.

The major organizations and the Italian government are only deceiving themselves if they think restoring AP tests will solve the problem. The problem is a lack of students. The students pay to take the tests. The AP tests are supposed to be self-sustaining. It is all the more puzzling that Italian American leaders, mostly successful businessmen, can't grasp that demand, not supply is the problem.

Our Institute wrote to the Italian Ambassador, Giulio Terzi Sant'Agata, advising him about the demand-side of the equation. He was not moved. Our Italian American heritage has been the victim of benign neglect — across the board. The AP tests are a measure of our vitality. Saving them is certainly a matter of pride. But pride only papers over the real decay of our culture. The fact is the AP tests have lapsed. And this poor show of matching funds confirms that community leaders are, thus far, committed only to form, not substance.

"Millions of Italian American children were allowed to wander away from their heritage over the decades. But no one except the Italic Institute seems to understand that," laments John Mancini, Chairman. ****

New Horizons, from p. 1

as *Aurora* and *The Italic Way Magazine*. But economic pressures and the general dumbing down of American society require a new approach to the heritage movement.

"Maybe we should emphasize our think-tank capabilities and become more vocal?" suggests President Bill Dal Cerro. "Controversy is the only thing that draws people's attention."

Adds Vice President Tony Vecchione, "The Community is far from democratic. Few voices protest the waste and misdirection by the so-called leadership."

Clearly, there is much to be discussed. How the Italic Institute will look in 2011 is a major concern for all the officers and governors.

"Whatever form," intones Vice Chairman Rosario Iaconis, "the IIA will remain focused on sustaining our ancient and heroic Italian pride." ****

THE MONEY MACHINE

You couldn't help but feel proud watching the annual Columbus Day Parade up New York's Fifth Avenue. The sea of tricolors, the infinite number of musicians. The bands and floats from Italy. The showcased talent of local vocalists. And the heart-felt exclamations of pride in family and heritage.



This group was welcomed.

This was the 66th parade organized by the Columbus Citizens Foundation (CCF) in Manhattan. Actually, the parade is older, originally launched in 1929 by the Italian Welfare League. Some officers of that League founded the CCF in 1944 and took the parade with them. It has since become a major income source for the CCF.

Over the years, the CCF has managed the parade with an emphasis on class, that is, keeping it classy. Even the casual observer will concede that imported Italian elements predominate – Italian military bands, high-priced Italian cars,



Our Aurora Color Guard was not welcomed.

floats from the various regions and Italian products. In a word, the parade has been Italianized. Fifth Avenue demands elegance and only real Italians, it seems, can convey that image. The Columbus Citizens has found not only a classy source of heritage but a lucrative one. The Italian government, the regions of Italy and Italian corporations pump hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of cash and services into the parade. Supplying bands, floats and TV commercials to the sole benefit of the Columbus Citizens Foundation, the Italians also patronize its formal gala,

UPDATES

Appeal to Speaker Pelosi – Concerning our continuing efforts to have the FBI discontinue the use of “family,” as in “crime family,” in describing only Italic criminal enterprises. Pelosi’s office has not responded to our letters, faxes or phone calls. The Speaker’s future is in doubt. If she survives the coming elections, we plan to visit Washington and pay her a visit.

Jewish Museum (NYC) – A formal request is being drafted by Vice Chairman Rosario Iaconis for the museum to better recognize and document the enormous efforts undertaken by Italy and individual Italians in saving European Jews from Nazi genocide.

Casa Italiana - New York’s Attorney General is reviewing a response from Columbia University. The Italic Institute represents the family that erected and donated this building to Columbia in 1927. We have requested details about the sale of the building to the Italian Republic without the consent of the donor family. *****

buying tables and journal ads. Converting the parade into an Italian event was a stroke of genius by the Brahmins of 69th Street.

To cover the American side, the Columbus Citizens invites in as many high school bands and bagpipers as it can find. New York City contributes uniformed marchers from every municipal department. To give it an Italian American splash, a few floats are manned with flag-waving scholarship recipients and their families. Even the Sons of Italy is invited in to bring up the very rear with a few banners and some senior citizens.

The Columbus Citizens Foundation nets enough from this display of heritage to give away about \$2 million each year to non-heritage causes. Little, if any, of this money goes to local Italian cultural programs. There used to be some Italian-American bands in prior years but the CCF doesn’t even look for them anymore. Nor does it have any youth groups of its own to parade before America.

Kilted Irish-American bagpipers have supplanted the old Italian-American bands. Parade announcer Joe Piscopo even jokingly questioned why there were bagpipers instead of a “mandolin” band.

Above all, the annual Columbus Day Parade is a huge for-profit show. For the one day that it crosses our television screens it pumps our spirits. For the remaining 364 days our heritage is on its own, underfunded and mismanaged. For the Brahmins of the Columbus Club the parade is a sacred cash cow and they are the arbiters of our heritage. *****

RAMBLIN' RABBI

This story got “lost” in the U.S. mainstream news. Aging Rabbi Yosef controls an extremist party within the current ruling Zionist coalition of Israel.

JERUSALEM (JTA, October 18, 2010) — Israeli Sephardic leader Rabbi Ovadia Yosef in his weekly Saturday night sermon said that non-Jews exist to serve Jews.



“Goyim were born only to serve us. Without that, they have no place in the world; only to serve the People of Israel,” he said during a public discussion of what kind of work non-Jews are allowed to perform on Shabbat.

“Why are gentiles needed? They will work, they will plow, they will reap. We will sit like an effendi and eat,” he said to some laughter.

Yosef, the spiritual leader of the Shas Party and the former chief Sephardi rabbi of Israel, also said that the lives of non-Jews are protected in order to prevent financial loss to Jews.

“With gentiles, it will be like any person: They need to die, but God will give them longevity. Why? Imagine that one’s donkey would die, they’d lose their money. This is his servant. That’s why he gets a long life, to work well for this Jew,” said the rabbi, who recently turned 90.

The American Jewish Committee

“LIGHTEN UP!”

Italian American activists are always being told to “lighten up” about media stereotypes and outright defamation. Remember when a *New York Times* reporter actually participated in a cast call for *Sopranos* extras and 14,000 “Italian-looking” hopefuls, including him, showed up? The reporter convinced the editor to place the story on the *Times*’ front page. The Italic Institute complained and was told to lighten up. It was not only an insulting story but a clear violation of journalist ethics.

Here are a couple of recent examples that demonstrate not everyone “lightens up” when it’s their turn to be the butt of derision:

Item #1 - a Wiccan astrologist complained about the label on a Halloween beer bottle that featured a witch burning at the stake. Marshalling the indignation of the Wiccan communities, the woman succeeded in getting the label removed and being invited to design a new label. This “inspirational” story also made a quarter page of the *New York Times*.



Item #2 - Some citizens of West Virginia were upset when they found out that a Republican political ad was produced in New York with northern actors pretending to be West Virginians, complete with plaid shirts and down-home accents. When it was discovered that the ad agency sought actors with a “hickey, blue-collar look” WV’s governor demanded that the ad be pulled. And so it was, with apologies.



condemned the rabbi’s remarks in a statement issued Monday.

“Rabbi Yosef’s remarks — suggesting outrageously that Jewish scripture asserts non-Jews exist to serve Jews — are abhorrent and an offense to human dignity and human equality,” said AJC Executive Director David Harris. “Judaism first taught the world that all individuals are created in the divine image, which helped form the basis of our moral code. A rabbi should be the first, not the last, to reflect that bedrock teaching of our tradition.” ****