



April, 2011  
No. 40

# The Officers' Log

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## AURORA IN GEAR

Thanks to the generosity of our membership, we are pleased to announce that our heritage training programs will resume. Both the Introductory and Advanced classes for pre-teens will restart in the fall. To make up for the lost 2010-2011, season a pilot course called *Aurora a Mano* was launched in March. Described as a “hands-on” course, the class was open to students who completed

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Our new “Hands-On” program introduces youngsters to crafts such as making a chocolate Italy and learning Italic calligraphy



## NEW CAMPUS INITIATIVE

Sometime last year, we were contacted by Italian American students from Touro Law School in Central Islip, Long Island, to mentor their Association. In response, our new Roman Academy Lecture Series was born. The Italian American Law Students Association, which numbers approximately 30 law students, is led by Gregory Lendino of Brooklyn. Our Institute agreed to present a series of ten

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Officers of the Touro Italian American Law Students Association meet with the Italic Institute's John Mancini (left). Association president Gregory Lendino is third from left.



## LEADERSHIP ROTATION

While there is not a long line forming to run for office, we are constitutionally obligated to conduct elections. Among the noteworthy changes that occurred last February, John Mancini has stepped down as Chairman of the Council of Governors. He has been succeeded by Rosario A. Iaconis. Chicagoan Bill Dal Cerro will continue as President and New Jerseyan Anthony Vecchione will remain Vice President. Chicagoan Don Fiore will be our sole Vice Chairman.

## NEW VIDEOS

Our Institute has ventured into the world of YouTube with a series of exclusive videos created by Vice Chairman Don Fiore. Their theme is Italian contributions to the world and they can be seen by going to our website [italic.org](http://italic.org) and clicking the YouTube icon.

Pass the word on to friends and acquaintances. Do your part in spreading the truth about our enormous heritage. This is truly a reality show.

# SUSTAINING THE CAUSE

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## Find the Deep End of the Pool

Do you know someone who is stuck in the shallow end of his/her heritage? Give him/her 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 \_\_\_\_\_

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Italic Institute of America, PO Box 818, Floral Park, NY 11002



### FROM CHAIRMAN ROSARIO A. IACONIS:

I am both humbled and honored to serve as the new Chairman of the Italic Institute of America.

However, this is no time for platitudes or false paeans to pride. The parlous state of the Italian-American community requires bold, decisive and immediate action. Indeed, moral outrage must be a necessary corrective to the mean-spirited derision that has long been our lot in society.

While upholding freedom of speech in America, we must hold the media and its enablers—including some in our midst—accountable. And I have personally embarked on a major effort to promote *italianita`* in the mainstream media.

But without nurturing future generations, such an effort would be futile.

To that end, the IIA is redoubling its youth education efforts. The *Aurora Heritage Program* continues with renewed vigor in the New York area. Moreover, we have expanded our outreach to include university students. (see p.1)

We are also moving to reinforce our historic bond with the Jewish community by underscoring Italy's courageous role in rescuing thousands of Jews during the Holocaust.

As Italy celebrates the 150th anniversary of the *Risorgimento*—the reunification of a nation first forged in 222 B.C.—the IIA vows to restore the ancient and heroic pride of one of humanity's most noble civilizations.

**Aurora**, from p. 1

the Introductory course last year. The unique feature of *Aurora a Mano* is that it combines review lessons with hands-on projects such as making chocolate “Italy Bars,” learning Italic calligraphy and building Roman water clocks and calculators using macaroni parts.

The experimental 5-lesson course is being held at the worst time of the school year -- Spring. Spring is when the kids are the busiest with sports, parties, and other activities. According to *Aurora* Director John Mancini, it is important for our Institute to demonstrate continuity. “Lack of funding means losing momentum, which means losing students,” he explains. “You can’t expect parents to stay with us when these interruptions occur.”

If *Aurora a Mano* succeeds, it may be developed into a new third level for students, giving *Aurora* a full 30-lesson program.

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## OFFICERS HUDDLE

We don’t get together often enough but when we do everything is on the table -- this time it was sushi. The winter conclave brought Vice Chairman Don Fiore and President Bill Dal Cerro from Chicago to the East Coast. Meetings were held in Manhattan and in New Jersey, organized by VP Tony Vecchione.

Discussions covered membership, media, elections and fundraising. Above all, the Institute leaders unanimously confirmed their commitment to IIA’s Classical Italian Movement.



(left to right) Chairman Rosario Iaconis, Gov. John Mancini, Gov. George Ricci. VP Anthony Vecchione, Vice Chairman Don Fiore, President Bill Dal Cerro

# UPDATES

**CRIME FAMILIES** – Planning for a lobbying trip to Washington DC is underway to drum up support for our request to the Dept. of Justice to cease using the absurd term “crime families” for Italic criminal organizations. For the moment, the DC pols are focused on budget issues and not approachable.

**JEWISH MUSEUM (NYC)** – We have concluded the research portion of our initiative, all the more convinced that the treatment of Italian efforts in saving Jews from the Holocaust is appallingly incomplete at this publicly-funded Museum. Private correspondence by Institute member Joe Graziose was ignored by the Museum’s director. Our official complaint will be sent to New York State officials as well as the Museum’s board.

**CASA ITALIANA** - New York’s Attorney General has forwarded Columbia University’s response to our complaint that the \$15 million building, a gift of the Paterno Family in 1927, was sold in violation of the donative purpose. In effect, the building is being used as an academic cloister rather than meeting the needs of the Italian American community. Legal remedies are being sought by our Institute.

**REUNIFICATION** - The year 2011 marks the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Italy’s reunification. It was March 17, 1861 that Victor Emanuel II was declared King of Italy. At the time, parts of ancient Italy were still occupied by foreign powers including region of Veneto (Venice), the Alpine region of Trentino-Alto-Adige and the most sacred place of all, Rome. Yet, historians had no problem making the date sacred and referring to it as the “unification.”

Our Institute stands virtually alone in insisting that 1861 marked the reunification, that Italy reached ALL its present borders in 222 B.C., one year before China. It is an essential tenet of our Classical Italian Movement that Italy was not just a geographic expression before Garibaldi, Mazzini and Cavour. In fact, these men knew that they were reassembling Europe’s first nation-state.

Last year we urged Italian Ambassador Giulio Terzi to promote the term “reunification” in all ceremonies and announcements, if only to provoke more thought. He chose to ignore the plea and missed the perfect opportunity to remove a mental barrier from the minds of 16 million Americans of Italian lineage. To most of them it is still a mystery why the terms Renaissance (“Rebirth”) and *Risorgimento* (“Revival”) are used. Of course, all roads lead to ancient Italy.

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# HAPPENINGS

## Campus, from p. 1

lectures, held on campus, dealing with all facets of the Italic experience. Lectures will encompass a history of Italy, the role of Italians in the formation of Catholicism, Western Civilization and America.

To introduce the series, the students were shown our exclusive *Roman Law in America* video narrated by Ms. Geraldine Ferraro – quite apropos to the law school venue and the recent death of Ms. Ferraro.

Our Roman Academy has been created to bring the classical Italian perspective to young adults. Perhaps some day it will be a bricks and mortar school but for now the intent is to offer a classical alternative to the “cinema and sociology” fare that is standard in Italian studies programs at many community colleges. “There is only so much introspective reflection that a dynamic people can sustain. Italic youth needs inspiration and a world view,” asserts John Mancini who delivers the lectures at Touro.

## MEDIA

Cracking the media wall is not an easy task for Italian American organizations. In most cases, opinion editors see us as concerned mainly with anti-defamation issues. Too few Italian American groups have a handle on international affairs or historic perspectives. That has changed significantly with the Italic Institute.

We have enclosed in this *Log* a number of press clippings written by our new Chairman, Rosario A. Iaconis. There are also some responses from *NY Post* readers. Note, in particular the letter from Mr. Andrea Fiano taking exception to Rosario’s op-ed piece referring to Italians saving Jewish lives during World War II. If you google Mr. Fiano you will find that he is associated with the Primo Levi Center in Manhattan. It is this group that influences Italy’s Consular officials, cultural centers including La Casa Italiana at Columbia University as well as Jewish groups around the world. Its manifest goal is to challenge the “good Italian” image that was earned and documented during the Holocaust. \*\*\*\*

## FIAT 500

The much awaited Fiat 500 (*Cinquecento*) may soon leave Mexico and begin cruising American roads. Chrysler retooled its PT Cruiser factory south of the border, and as we write, 500s are rolling off the line.

The auto reviews are good thus far, with raves about roominess, design and performance. Mileage may disappoint those who were expecting the European rating of 50 mpg. The U.S. version is heavier and more powerful (101hp), giving the vehicle only a 32 or 33 mpg on the highway. (Ford’s family-sized Fusion gets that much.) Chrysler may have to rely on some Italian pizzaz to help market the 500.

## OUR PREZ QUESTIONS NIAF

Last year, Institute President Bill Dal Cerro informed John Marino, current president of the National Italian American Foundation, that actor John Travolta was discussing a starring role in a biopic of late gangster John Gotti. As Travolta is a mainstream Hollywood star, his presence in such a film would worsen our already tainted national image. Travolta has been honored by the NIAF in the past and he often attends its annual galas in D.C. Marino promised to reach out to Travolta to dissuade him from starring in this film.

A few weeks ago, Travolta, Gotti Jr, and the film’s helmsman, Nick Cassavettes confirmed the project. Did the NIAF actually reach out to Travolta, as promised? Whether it did or not, this is a telling example of how little power and influence the NIAF really has. Apparently, Travolta and others are honored merely for their celebrity, to sell tickets. Italian image be damned

And damned it will be, once again, via the new John Gotti film. Kudos to the NIAF for enabling—once again— yet another shallow Hollywood celebrity at the expense of “fighting defamatory images of Italians in the media.”

## COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

Just to update you on the goals of the major Italian American organizations, here is a quick recap.

**NIAF** – Last October, it was announced that a member of NIAF had left the Foundation \$2.6 million. The bequest came from a frequent attendee of NIAF galas. NIAF can now do more of whatever it does.

**SIF** – The Sons of Italy Foundation is now underwriting Autism research. Last year the Foundation donated \$235,000 to rebuild a special school in Aquila, Italy. Recently, SIF has partnered with the Doug Flutie, Jr. Foundation for Autism. Since 1959, SIF has given away \$110 million to medical charities and other causes. Apparently, the Foundation’s Italian heritage work in America has been successfully completed.

**UNICO** – This service organization has assumed the mantle of anti-defamation, particularly in the matter of *Jersey Shore*. Spearheading the fight is former national president Andre DeMino. Despite ample media appearances DeMino has been unable to derail the MTV reality show. The “guidos and guidettes” are headed to Italy next season. *Et tu Italia?* No comment.

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