



April, 2014
No. 54

The Officers' Log

Tel: (516) 488-7400 email: ItalicOne@aol.com Website: Italic.org

'UNBROKEN' IN WORKS



It seems to be taking forever, and director Angelina Jolie (above) admits it's a daunting task to recreate the life and adventures of one of the most remarkable individuals of the Second World War. But scheduled for release this December, the remarkable story of Louis Zamperini (above), Army Air Corps veteran, will hopefully be the first mega-hit biopic about a non-fictional Italian American. Louie Zamperini, now 97 and living in California, came to the public's attention with the bestselling book *Unbroken*. His incredible will to survive the forces of nature and human cruelty puts him in a pantheon of acknowledged Italian American heroes of World War II that includes Medal of Honor winner John Basilone and Army Ranger Henry Mucci. Basilone filled a number of episode's in HBO's saga *Pacific*. Mucci was spotlighted in the feature film *The Great Raid*, about the rescue of American POWs in the occupied Phillipines.

We have had positive biopics before like *Serpico* (1973), *The Great Caruso* (1951), *Somebody Up There Likes Me* (boxer Rocky Graziano, 1956) and some brutish ones like *Raging Bull* about boxer Jake La

continued on p. 4

STILL PUSHING!

Every year we try to interest HBO in rebroadcasting its 1999 movie *Vendetta*, based on Prof. Richard Gambino's book of the same name. It chronicles the horrific lynching of eleven Italians in New Orleans in 1891. "This year," recounts Executive Director John Mancini, "we even contacted the History

continued on p. 4

CONFUSED NEWS

On March 21st, with video scenes of President Obama's visit to Italy, NBC's Brian Williams misidentified Italian President Giorgio Napolitano as "another Vatican official." Seems

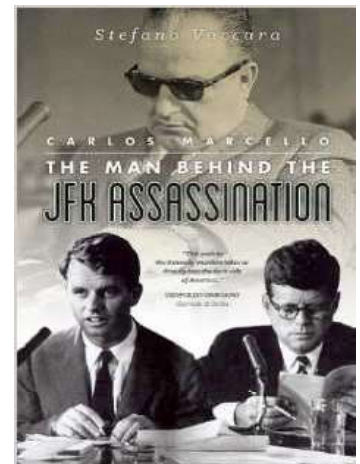


that the news hounds at NBC aren't familiar with Italy's Head of State. We emailed NBC about it but no one deemed it important enough to admit the *faux pas* to us or to the audience in the next day's broadcast. ****

Page 1

AMAZING DISGRACE

The Mafia Seduces Academia



Recently, our Institute received a flyer from a Long Island Italian cultural center hawking a new book that claims New Orleans' mobster Carlos Marcello engineered the JFK assassination, as well as those of Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King. Unlike the many conspiracy theories about November 22, 1963, however, this one was penned by an Italian national, Stefano Vaccara.

"Why an Italian cultural center would promote such a book is beyond me," asserts Executive Director John Mancini. "So I bought the book, read it, and was even more shocked that the book was taken seriously. Did the academics even read the book?"

Mancini wrote to the Italian Center to urge the director to cancel the book presentation scheduled later that month. "Not only did he decline, but he informed me that other university Italian centers were featuring

continued on p. 2

YOUR GENEROSITY

Patrons of Italian Heritage (\$250 +)

George P. Ricci

Sustainers of the Institute (\$100 +)

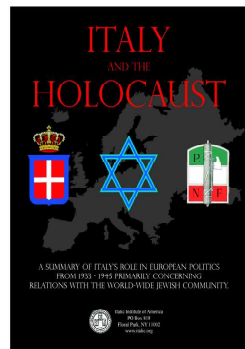
Stephen Aiello	Salvatore La Greca
Kenneth V. Breglio	Maria Gloria
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph DiPirro	Anthony Martignetti
William J. Fanciullo	Louis Rago
Mr. & Mrs. John Garretto	

Supporters of the Institute (\$50 +)

Armando Andreozzi	Mario Ignagni
Camille Annichiarico	Anthony T. Ruscio
Joel Catania	Wanda C. Savona
William Cerruti	Charles Sclafani
William J. Dal Cerro	Nicholas A. Solfaro, Sr.

Friends of the Institute (\$25 +)

Peter J. Forgione



An Institute Exclusive!

The only complete summary of Italy's role before and during the Holocaust

This 58-page, easy-to-read report with photographs is only \$15 complete for members. \$25 for non-members

Just Cooks & Crooks?

The Italian heritage has been boiled down to a sad state today. We are a lot more complex than our media images. What to do?

We are the Alternative!

Enroll the person below as a member (\$50 check enclosed)
 Renew my membership for 2014 (\$50 check enclosed)
 Enclosed is a tax-deductible donation of \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

Italic Institute of America, PO Box 818,
Floral Park, NY 11002
516.488.7400 www.italic.org

Media Hits

Since our last report, Institute officers have had letters and op-ed pieces published in *Investor's Business Daily*, the *Baltimore Sun*, and *The Washington Post*. (see the Log insert)

We are also happy to report that some of our members have successfully called out the media on their own.

Walter Santi of Chicago was published in the *Du Page County Daily Herald* complaining about a new exploitive cable program called *The Capones* (see the insert).



Walter Santi

Gennaro Pupa of Redondo Beach, CA questioned the *L.A. Times* tone in reporting alleged anti-gay attacks in Italy. He went even further by sending the *Times* reporter a copy of our *Italy and the Holocaust* report.

"We salute Walter and Gennaro for their unflinching defense of heritage," says Institute Chairman Rosario Iaconis. "They are not resting in retirement and they prove that the Roman spirit is not dormant."

Amazing Disgrace, from p. 1

Vaccara's book, including NYU, CUNY and Stony Brook," lamented Mancini.

"Vaccaro's slim volume doesn't even rise to the level of a *National Enquirer* expose'. Moreover, how is such poppycock pertinent to Italian culture?" asks Institute Chairman Rosario Iaconis. "And why would any university welcome an author who peddles sensationalistic tripe?"

Among the Vaccara claims is that the Kennedy hits were part of a mob war against the "1920s bootlegging" Kennedys. As to connecting Marcello with Lee Harvey Oswald, Vaccara recounts the obscure tale of an unidentified Georgia businessman who thought he saw Oswald ("a man of medium height in a dark suit") accepting money in a Marcello family restaurant in New Orleans in January, 1963. That's it!

"Tying the sea-change that engulfed America from 1963 to this very day – political murders, racial violence and perhaps even Vietnam – to an anti-Italian stereotype is the nadir of ethnic defamation," argues Institute Governor Don Fiore.

Vaccara sums up his conspiracy-laden attitude in his dedication: "For...the generation that lost the dream of the New Frontier at the hands of the Mafia."

PRESERVING HERITAGE

Among our national membership are individuals who man the front lines of our community of 17 million. So you can better understand what it takes to preserve and perpetuate the Italian heritage, we shall occasionally feature individuals and their valuable work on our behalf.

There are many Italian cultural centers around the country. At least three of them are operated by Institute members: the Italian Cultural Center in Carmichael, CA (Bill & Patricia Cerruti), the Italian Heritage Museum in Albany, NY (Prof. Phil Di Novo) and Casa Italia in Stone Park, IL (Vito D'Ambrosio). While these centers continue to stay true to their founding mission, others are often just rental facilities, or in the case of La Casa Italiana at Columbia University, nesting places for academics. The purpose of all Italian cultural centers must be the dissemination of our Italian heritage.



Casa Italia, outside Chicago, was originally a seminary complex spread over seventeen acres. In 1998, it was rented out by the Scalabrini Order to the Italian American community. It now serves as both a religious and cultural site.

In 2012, Institute member Vito D'Ambrosio was appointed executive director of Casa Italia after a career in management at General Motors. Vito was born in Italy and educated here. He brings not only the skill of management but the passion and perspective common among all Italic Institute members. We asked Vito to explain how Casa Italia operates.

What's the most difficult part of running the cultural center? 1) Developing income streams to be able to continue in pursuit of our goals is the biggest challenge. Repair and upgrade of our deteriorating infrastructure remains the biggest nuts and bolts challenge. 2) The other major difficulty is getting Italian Americans and Italian American organizations to work together. Italians need to embrace our differences and work



**Casa Italia's Executive Director
Vito D'Ambrosio**

more toward unity. It is this cultural difference that keeps us divided as both the political and economic power houses we need to be.

The neighborhood of Stone Park has changed since Casa Italia was built. Does that impact use by our community?

Somewhat. Our Italian community is very dispersed but Stone Park is centrally located and is close to major expressways and Interstate Highways.

What kind of facilities do you have on-site? We house the Italian Cultural Center, with its regional museums and library, including the unique Savoia Exhibit, a 1/100th scale handmade replica of St. Peter's. The Italian American Veterans Museum and Library is also on the property

Casa Italia offers Italian Language programs for youngsters and adults. Our Summer Camp (below) is an annual favorite. Children are taught language, cooking, archeology, traditional Italian dance, opera appreciation, fencing, nutrition, social skills, sports, and lots of play time.

We offer diverse lectures, talks and services. Our Genealogy Department has become a genealogy center for the Midwest. Cooking demonstrations are often held. The newly formed Casa Italia Soccer League will boast 100 players in its second season. With the addition of 4 new Bocce courts, our 8 courts will host 3 tournaments this year.

Casa is home to many festivals and religious feasts in the Festival Center Pavilion. The most famous is San Francesco di Paulo, which has up to 8,000 attendees. The Pavilion also hosts many weddings and private parties. So, we also have a full time

continued on p. 4



Casa Italia from p. 3

restaurant on property, Nonna Graziella's Cucina Italiana, which features a fabulous wood burning oven.

We're into the arts. Our latest book, *Italian American Women in Chicago*, is doing very well, with more being planned. Casa Italia is home to Main Street Opera and Main Street Cabaret musical groups which have staged operas as well as musicals here.

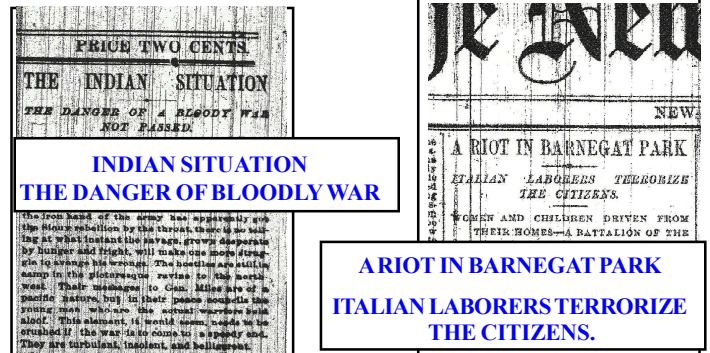
Because our property's roots are Catholic, we have one of the most beautiful chapels you will ever visit. Our Calvary Hill replica remains one of the most popular religious sites in the area. Pilgrimages, prayers, Stations of the Cross, and processions remain a big part of our religious heritage.

Do the national Italian American organizations assist you in any way? Not at this time. Our local organizations do much to help out and some very generous individuals assist in keeping our doors open, as do property rentals and fundraising events.

Do Italian American legislators assist you with grants? Illinois Senator James DeLeo and Representative Angelo "Skip" Saviano have helped secure some money in the past. Money is very tight now with the current statewide conditions, so less money is available

What do you consider the major goals of your center? To be a home for all Italians, to showcase Italian culture, to educate our young, and to be effective advocates for our community. ****

Indians (and Italians) On Warpath in 1891



One week in January, 1891: South Dakota was about to explode in a new Indian war and Italian immigrants were "terrorizing" peaceful New Jersey.

The Indians agreed to return to their reservation, but the Italian laborers still wanted to be paid for their work and the Militia was alerted to put down the uprising. Seems the Italians had been stiffed by a real estate syndicate building a Jersey shore development. Working outdoors in January with false promises and nary a nickel to feed their families, the Italians could take no more. This was before *Jersey Shore* guidos!

The Italians had chased families living in the development to the woods but "damage was slight." The syndicate agreed to pay the men within the week. Two months later, elsewhere, eleven Italians were lynched in New Orleans. America was a tough place. ****

MISSING?



Our national magazine is sent economically via USPS Bulk Mail. Often, it takes 3 weeks to receive. If you haven't received your copy yet, let us know. ****

Still Pushing! from p. 1

Channel suggesting they license the movie from HBO for broadcast on History. They thanked us but it was a no-go."

"The media want their stories not ours," claims Institute President Bill Dal Cerro, "and the more outrageous their version of history the more they defend it." Dal Cerro has just tried again to interest the *Chicago Sun-Times* and *Chicago Tribune* in squashing the urban legend that the old Capone gang rubbed out Chicago Mayor Anton Cermak in 1933. We originally detailed the subject in *Log #50*, last July. "We'll try again next year," promises Dal Cerro.

Says Institute Director Don Fiore, "I'm tired of hearing some Italian Americans say we should stop anti-defamation activities and focus on the positive. The reality is America is not interested in real history. They're hooked on our mafia lore." ****

Unbroken from p. 1

Motta (1980). But *Unbroken* will be the first epic with an Italic hero spanning the globe, from the 1936 Berlin Olympics to air warfare in the Pacific, to ocean survival, and degrading imprisonment.

Of course, the final product may not be all we hope for but if the casting details are any indication, Universal Studios and Ms. Jolie, will make us proud. "Young Louie" is described as Italian American and both his parents must speak fluent Italian. However, adult Louie is being played by an Irish American. You can see the film trailer on YouTube at this address: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J0e7jCEveUE> ****

