



The Officers' Log

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MY VACATION

by John Mancini, Exec. Dir.

I've long known from Italian American chronicler Giovanni Schiavo that Italians were a huge part of opening the Americas, despite the general perception that we waited 400 hundred years after Columbus to settle here. So it was nice to visit Arizona this past March and see first-hand how important Italians were, even in the deserts of Mexico and the Southwest.

One Native American landmark we visited was associated with Padre Eusebio Kino (nee



Chini). It seems that the Spanish Jesuits who explored the Southwest and established missions were mostly Italians from every part of Italy: Fr. Giovanni Salvaterra was Kino's superior. Fr. Francesco Saeta was murdered by Indians in 1695. Other Jesuits included: Fr. Orazio Polici, Fr. Geromino Minutuli, Fr. Francesco Piccolo, Fr. Angelo Marras, Fr. Luigi Velarde, Fr. Domenico Crescoli, and Fr. Luigi Marciano.

This is a fabulous story of Italians in America that never made it to the Westerns. ****

GIFTING A LEGACY

We often receive \$50 donations along with membership renewals. But one member, Bill Fanciullo of New Jersey, converted his donation into a gift membership for friends and relatives - 20 of them! Bill shares our passion for heritage, especially when he read our *Italic Way* story on the effects of intermarriage. He chose to use our Institute as a message to his children and grandchildren. Elsewhere, Frank DiPiero of Chicago gifted five new members. What better way for our Institute to amplify its resources than to invest in new and younger members.

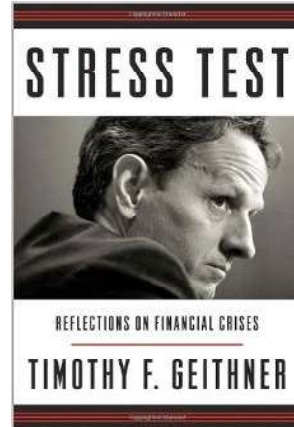
Speaking of new members, we have brought in 41 new ones since January. They all share our yearning for the classical Italian heritage. If you know of anyone who fits this standard send them to our website (italic.org) for our **Free Offer** of an *Officers' Log* and our exclusive *Inventions of Italy Placemat*.

Speaking of gifts, our annual Latin Language Awards were given to three students in local high schools. As one recipient wrote: "*My appreciation for the whole of Italian history has only grown through the study of Latin and Italian.*" That's it in a nutshell! ***

THE SILVIO PLOT

by Rosario A. Iaconis, Chairman

Italy's longstanding alliance with America did not prevent former US Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner and various Eurocrats from conspiring to depose Silvio Berlusconi as Italian prime minister during the European debt crisis in 2011. *In Stress Test: Reflections on Financial Crises*, Geithner reveals how a cadre of European Union officials approached him



Since the "regime change" and Berlusconi's ouster, Italy has been ruled by three unelected prime ministers.



about overthrowing Italy's democratically elected premier: "They wanted us to refuse to back IMF loans to Italy as long as he refused to go."

Though the billionaire media magnate-cum-prime minister had backed the U.S.

YOUR GENEROSITY

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Spread Our Gospel!

How many Italian Americans are getting the sort of information you read in this newsletter? Very few.

This is the difference between a
“Classical” Italian and a “Lite” Italian.

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The Silvio Plot from p. 1
interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan—and sent Italian troops into harm’s way—powerful EU financial figures engineered a silent coup to remove Berlusconi from office. While Geithner indicated that such an outcome was indeed desirable, he issued a Judas-like caveat: “We can’t have his blood on our hands.”

Eventually, *il Cavaliere* was taken out by the Brussels *organizatsiya*, the global bond-market elite and, quite possibly, Germany’s iron chancellor, Angela Merkel. According to Britain’s *Daily Telegraph*, Berlusconi’s ouster was a “constitutional scandal of the first order.”

(ED: Anthony Vecchione, VP, researched this piece)

CBS: Sad Lesson

In our January *Log*, we mentioned that we appealed to two CBS Coporation board members – Joseph Califano and Frederic Salerno – to help us edit the words “wop” and “Italians cheat” from two primetime TV shows. Once in syndication, these shows can live on for decades, watched by millions of viewers.

Neither Califano nor Salerno dignified our appeals with a response. Instead, we received a boilerplate response from the CBS Legal Dept. In short, having high-ranking Italian Americans in the CBS Corporation means nothing in anti-defamation work. Califano and Salerno apparently don’t like making waves while collecting salaries of \$250,000 each.

In comparison, while our appeals to CBS were occurring, two Minnesota senators agreed to withdraw support for President Obama’s choice of ambassador to Norway because Norwegian Americans demanded it. The candidate’s sin: mistakenly referring to the prime minister of Norway as “president,” a sign of his ignorance of Norway. These are responsive leaders!

Elsewhere, in New York, state Comptroller Tom Di Napoli, who invests the state’s pension funds, announced he would vote against all the board members of Monster Beverage Corp. because there is no diversity on the board, especially women. Di Napoli is not afraid to use his power.



Califano (l) and Salerno

6-YEAR STRUGGLE CONTINUES

La Casa Italiana Still Contested

We began our quest to restore the Italian House to its original mission at Columbia University in New York back in 2008. Six years later, after an unsuccessful lawsuit, we continue to pursue our options, currently appealing to the New York State Attorney General.

We have learned much about *La Casa*, academia, the Italian government, and Italian Americans in these years. Here are some reflections from our Executive Director John Mancini:

“Focusing on the building itself, we cannot help but be awestruck by the caliber of Italian Americans who built and donated this Renaissance palazzo in upper Manhattan. In 1927, most Italian Americans had been born in Italy and their heritage was a living thing rather than a distant memory. It was the same year that Sacco and Vanzetti were wrongly executed – Italians were not America’s sweethearts. Columbia University was the closest college for Italian youth living in nearby East Harlem, and a new generation of Italian students and some wealthy entrepreneurs found common ground in a dream to plant the Italian flag at America’s premier university. Columbia already had three ethnic institutes: *Casa Hispanica*, *Maison Francaise*, and *Deutsches Haus*. These buildings still stand today, functioning as cultural centers. Our generation of 1927 not only wanted to add an Italian presence to the campus but to exceed the size of the others. Even today, *La Casa Italiana* at 6-stories and 30,000 s.f., is twice the size of *Hispanica* and *Francaise*, and three times larger than *Deutsches*. But unlike them, *La Casa* was shorn of its *italianita`* and its Italian American leadership in 1990. It is no longer an open Italian cultural center but a closed research center with a European mission. Instead of housing the Dept. of Italian, it houses two dozen Fellows working on research papers as diverse as “*Brain Representations of Mental States*,” and “*Aural Anamorphosis and Sound Clues*.” Its doors are closed to both the students of Columbia and the community except for occasional lectures and recitals.”

In this time of declining Italian studies, Mancini wonders if anyone is connecting the dots. “The major groups and the Italian government recently coughed up \$3 million to keep the Italian Advanced Placement tests alive. Barely 2,000 high school students sign up for the Italian tests (Latin gets 6,000

takers without support!) So, we give \$3 million to the College Board on one hand, and on the other we surrender the 87-year old citadel of Italian culture in America.” Laments Mancini, “We couldn’t shine the shoes of the generation of 1927!”

Says Chairman Rosario Iaconis, “*La Casa Italiana* must return to its roots as a bastion of *italianita`*. But only the IIA deems this a mission worth fighting.”

SOME DOINGS

Our officers have been getting the word out in newsprint around the country. Chairman Rosario Iaconis hit the mark again with the *Wall Street Journal* (on Dante Alighieri), President Bill dal Cerro got ink in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* (a movie review) and *The Daily Illini* (against Spike Lee). See the insert.

Meanwhile, Governor Don Fiore gave a lecture on aviator Italo Balbo at *Casa Italia* in Chicago. He is a national expert.

Our California rep Bob Masullo and his wife sent this photo of Nice, France (formerly Nizza, birthplace of Giuseppe Garibaldi) and a quote on his tour of Provence, France:



“I’m sailing down the Rhone River and am amazed at how often our guide tells us that a structure we are looking at was built by the Romans, or by medieval Florentines, or by 18th century or modern-day Italians. Italians taught the French how to cook, how to grow grapes and make wine, and even gave them the language (Latin) which they corrupted into French. Truly, France is an Italy-wannabe.”

[ED: Just a historic note: the name Provence comes from *provincia*, for it was Roman Italy’s first province in Gaul. It includes the French Riviera as well as major cities such as Aix-en-Provence and Avignon. North of Provence, the city of Lyons along the Rhone was founded by Mucius Plancus who is buried in Gaeta, Italy, his home town.] ****

UNITED STATES OF VENETIA

In our latest issue of *The Italic Way* we suggested that our celebration of Columbus be combined with explorers Cabot, Vespucci, and Verrazano as “Team America.” Suggests President Bill Dal Cerro, “Columbus takes a lot of flak these days, maybe we need to redirect everyone’s attention from demonizing the discovery to the reality that Italians essentially linked two worlds.”

“Why aren’t we celebrating June 24th every year?” asks Executive Director John Mancini. “That’s the day Giovanni Caboto landed on North America in 1497 and established England’s claim to this continent.” Indeed, that claim is why we now speak English. In fact, Canadians celebrate the day.



According to extant documents, the English government didn’t pay for the voyage and granted Cabot land rights to all he discovered. Cabot even took possession of the land in the name of Venice as well as England (with a Venetian flag). “North America should have been named Venetia,” asserts Mancini. “Amerigo Vespucci only landed in South America.”

Celebrating Team America would not only take the heat off Columbus but would explain the opening of the New World more accurately. ****

SANTA MARIA: FOUND OFF HAITI?

A reporter from Fox News contacted us last month for our opinion on the alleged discovery of the remains of the Santa Maria off Haiti. He wanted to know what significance the discovery has, aside from archeological.

Our views, like so many news items, ended up on the cutting floor, but here is what we feel is important to know:



The Santa Maria ran aground on Christmas Eve during the First Voyage. The loss of the largest of his three ships forced Columbus to cut short the voyage and return home to Spain.

Because of the wreck, Columbus had his first meeting with a local chief. At this meeting he was given a gift of gold which confirmed his belief in the potential wealth to be had.

The Spanish captain of the Pinta did not come to Columbus’ aid immediately and it confirmed to Columbus the resentment many Spaniards had for him. (That resentment would ultimately lead to Columbus’ arrest for punishing Spanish nobles during his Third Voyage, among other charges.)

With timbers and goods from Santa Maria, Columbus was able to build the first fort in the New World. On his Second Voyage he found the fort destroyed and the men missing. He concluded that his men had provoked the natives but that the natives were also untrustworthy. ****

BELIEVE IT OR NOT!

The late Herb Jeffries was the black Gene Autry, or Roy Rogers – a singing cinema cowboy. The only thing was he needed lots of face coloring to live up to his image. You see, Jeffries was born Umberto Alejandro Balentino. His mother was white, as were his five wives (he lived to be 100). He claimed he had a little Ethiopian blood but not enough, it seems, to hide his Italian features, his gifted singing voice, or “smoky blue eyes.”

“I just knew that my life would be more interesting as a black guy.” It certainly was! ****

