



# The Officers' Log

Tel: (516) 488.7400

email: [ItalicOne@italic.org](mailto:ItalicOne@italic.org)

Website: [Italic.org](http://Italic.org)

## STRONGER COLUMBUS EFFORT

We Join Forces in Washington, DC



NCCA's Steve Upton and JP McCusker flank John Mancini at the Columbus Monument in Washington, DC

You can bet that this Columbus day will be marked with the same anti-Columbus polemics that have become the staple of October. The Italic Institute has been proactive in addressing the challenge. "Don't be surprised if one day Congress gives in to Columbus detractors and renames the holiday," predicts Executive Director John Mancini. "A big part of the problem is

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## LA CASA: NEW INITIATIVE

We Nominate Italian American Scholar

For those of you who have followed the trials and tribulations of our Institute's quest to restore the mission of *La Casa Italiana* at Columbia University, this may be a turning point.

"Clearly, a major concern is the paucity of Italian American professionals at *Casa Italiana* - in staff, governance, and fellowships," says Institute Chairman Rosario Iaconis. "We now propose a *modus vivendi* that the Italian government, the Italo-American community, and Columbia University can fully embrace in a spirit of unity,

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Dr. Richard Gambino, our nominee

## IS MARCH JUST ANOTHER MONTH?

We have the Fourth of July to celebrate the birth and unification of the United States. Italians mark June 2nd, not as Italy's unification, but the start of the Italian Republic in 1946.

Yet, March should be special to all Italians. March 1, 222 BC was when the Italic people reached the Alps, a year before China's unification. March 17, 1861, was when the House of Savoy assumed the kingship of a

new, reunited Italy.

According to Institute Governor Don Fiore, "The closest Italians come to celebrating their ancient unity is Nov. 4th, *La Giornata dell'Unita Nazionale*, which commemorates the completion of the *Risorgimento* with the annexation of Trentino and Istria as a result of WWI. But, it's just a day of observance. Nobody gets the day off."

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## Know Anyone Trapped In A Cultural Corner?

Has someone you know been stuck in an Italian heritage rut? Let us show him/her the way out!

### We are the Alternative!

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# NEW AMBASSADOR

Italy's new ambassador to the U.S. is **Armando Varricchio**. Born in Venice, Varricchio has served in Budapest, Brussels (E.U.), and Serbia. He is 54-years old, married with two children.



## Columbus Effort, from p.1

how Columbus is perceived.”

Mancini went on to explain that revisionists ignore the fact that the holiday is about exploration, not European imperialism. Even Italian Americans mistakenly believe it's all about Italian culture.

Last month, Mancini met with executives of the National Christopher Columbus Association (NCAA), a group which holds a memorial ceremony in conjunction with the U.S. Parks Dept. and the Marine Band at the Columbus Monument (below) in Washington, DC. Our Institute is now a member of the Association.

Mancini explained, “I urged them to complement their annual ceremony by honoring pioneering Americans in various fields, to accentuate the connection of Columbus with today's ‘discoverers.’ I even suggested astronaut Scott Kelly who spent one year in space, quite a feat. Inviting members of Congress wouldn't hurt.”

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# We Nailed It!



Not only is our latest issue of *The Italic Way* one of the most popular we have produced, but its cover photo of Phil Saviano, the guy who helped blow the lid off Boston's church scandal, is all the more relevant because the 2015 movie *Spotlight* that featured him has won the Academy Award for Best Picture. Observes Institute Governor Don Fiore, "*The Italic Way* sets the only serious tone in a community obsessed with glitzy food and travel features." \*\*\*\*

# We Help Out



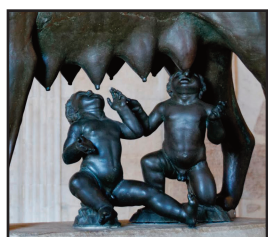
We reported in Log #63 how Institute member Joe Graziose has been our link to the Jewish community and to Elizabeth Bettina, author of *It Happened in Italy*, stories about how Italian citizens aided Jewish refugees during the Second World War.

Joe has now been instrumental in obtaining a new venue for the film *My Italian Secret*, partly based on Bettina's work. The showing will be at the Huntington (Long Island) Jewish Center on March 20th at 7:30 pm. \*\*\*\*

# An Offensive Culture?

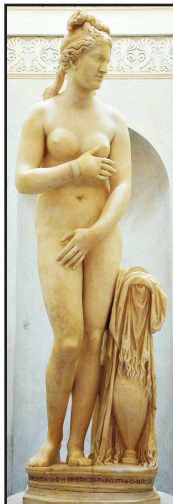
Move over Donald Trump! It seems Greco-Italic art may be more offensive.

Last January, some phantom Rome bureaucrat ordered a number of nude statues (including Venus, right) in the Capitoline Museum boxed up so as not



to offend the visiting Iranian president, a Muslim.

Wonder how many ancient peoples the Romans offended with their iconic she-wolf (above)? \*\*\*\*



# Madoff's "Financial Wiseguy"

If you didn't watch the cable TV version of the Madoff pyramid scheme, Michael Hale's *NY Times* review captured the essence: Bernie Madoff couldn't have done it without his trusted "financial wiseguy" Frank DiPascali (bottom photo).

DiPascali was played to theatrical effect by veteran wiseguy actor Michael Rispoli (top photo), no doubt cast for the role on the strength of his membership in the *Tony Soprano* gang.



According to Institute Vice President Anthony Vecchione, "Rispoli used his limited acting skill to play DiPascali as a street-talking-punk-turned-accountant. In fact, the real DiPascali had attended a Catholic high school and St. John's University in Queens, NY. He was a crook, all right, but not a guttersnipe."



Another fascinating thing about the movie was that only Bernie, Frank, and Frank's Italian American assistant were the perpetrators of the worst pyramid scheme in U.S.

history. Bernie's family were mere pawns. Brother Peter even sought rabbinical guidance when he sensed skullduggery at the firm. In real life, the judge saw Peter as an accomplice and sentenced him to ten years.

"That would make the Madoffs an official 'crime family.' But that term is reserved for Italian Americans," offers Executive Director John Mancini.

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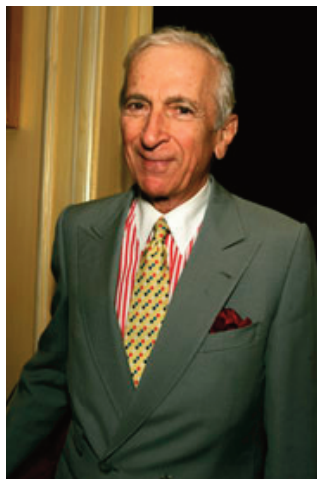
# RADIO HOST SCORES



One of our many Chicagoland members hosts a boutique radio talk show he calls *Keepin' It Real with Frankie D.*, specializing in Italian American affairs. Frank Di Piero (left), his full name, demonstrates how a limited number of proud Italic people can keep alive

the true nature of our amazing heritage.

Recently, Frank conducted a telephone interview with New York-based author Gay Talese (right). A prolific researcher and writer, Talese has produced works ranging from Italian American history to sex in America, from an expose' on the *NY Times* to the story of the Verrazano Bridge.



You can hear the fascinating story of his legendary 1965 *Esquire Magazine* article "Frank Sinatra Has A Cold," how he refused to follow *Esquire's* order to dig into Sinatra's alleged Mafia connections and found the real Sinatra through interviews with all the people who were touched by the famed vocalist.



You can listen to Frank's interview online:  
<http://italianamericanlife.com/>

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## La Casa, from p.1

comity, and intellectual rigor."

Our Institute has submitted the name of Dr. Richard Gambino to be considered for membership on *La Casa's* 12-person Board of Guarantors. Dr. Gambino is a member of the Institute and author of *Blood of My Blood* and *Vendetta*, works that yielded major insights into the Italian experience in America. "His credentials are impeccable: a Ph.D from New York University, a teaching

# A BOSTON OUTLET

Nicola Orichuia, one of our members, recently opened an Italian American bookstore (the only one in America, according to Nicola) in Boston's Italian North End. So, our Executive Director paid the store a visit in February to drop off some complementary stock of *The Italic Way* magazine and our unique *Italy and the Holocaust* report.

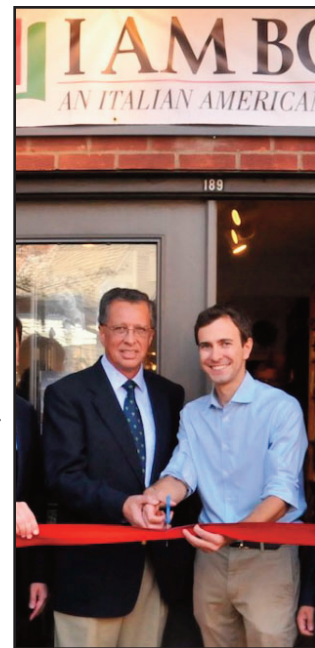


Mancini is pictured with Nicola's associate Alessandra Micco — like Nicola Italian-born and bi-lingual.

"The shop sits right across the street from Paul Revere's house," explains Mancini. "The North End is quite a mix of Revolutionary Boston and Little Italy. It's a must see for anyone visiting Bean Town."

Nicola's bookshop was opened last October with much fanfare, including a ribbon cutting attended by the Boston Consul General and city officials. Nicola is pictured in shirtsleeves with his business partner Jim Pinzino.

The store contains a variety of books and periodicals—a big seller is children's books—as well as Italian products such as upscale leather goods and ceramics. \*\*\*\*



career at Queens College (CUNY) and an association with Stony Brook (SUNY)," explains Executive Director John Mancini.

The Institute's recommendation was submitted to NY Consul General Natalia Quintavalle, who sits on the Board, the Italian Ambassador, and the President of Italy, who is also honorary president of *La Casa's* Italian Academy. \*\*\*\*