



The Official Log

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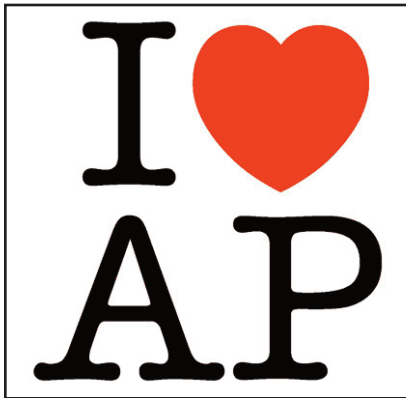
Website: Italic.org

BY A THREAD!

Italian Language AP Still Struggling

It sounds good as a percentage: “Italian AP grows by 8% in 2016!” But quoting percentages is often deceptive – for example, zero to one is a 100% gain but means very little.

The College Board recently released its annual figures for Advanced Placement tests in high school. It costs each student about \$85 to take the test which can earn credits at their chosen college.



The problem is the College Board offers AP tests only if there are enough paying students. Italian language was a non-starter at the College Board and so it convinced the Italian government and some Italian American organizations to cough up \$3 million to develop

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CHANGES AHEAD

From Membership to Think Tank

Next month marks our 30th anniversary. We have produced quite a lot in those three decades - a national magazine, educational videos, and a reputation for straight talk—but our membership base never achieved our ambitious goals.



We are not unique in having declining numbers, nor are we the only Italian American group with predominately

No Dues Will Be Collected in 2017

senior citizens. “Many of our own generation didn’t awaken to the marvel of their heritage until their 50s,” observes Senior Analyst Don Fiore. “But, today’s young

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ITALY JOLTED BY VOTE



Prime Minister Matteo Renzi (left) bet the farm on a referendum this month to downsize the Italian Senate as a step toward reducing political gridlock. What he got was his own walking papers. Seems that Italian voters didn’t think it was a good idea to tamper with the status quo.

For now, Renzi will keep the PM seat warm until new elections can be held in 2017. That might be fine for Italians but the rest of Europe is in a tizzy, fearing Italy is on the brink of an economic reckoning. Its banks are loaded with bad debt, its economy is stagnating, and unemployment among the young is reaching 30% in some regions, and many Italians want to bolt the euro.

There may be a Trump somewhere to lead the disgruntled Italians but he hasn’t much to work with. By the way, Trump’s nickname is Italy is *Pannocchio* (corn cob) in reference to his corn silk hair. ****

STOP THE PRESSES!

by John Mancini, Co-Founder



Back in the 1970s I subscribed to *IAM: The Italian American Magazine* in the hopes it would deepen my knowledge of heritage. (Like most of you I was raised in a 100% Italian family, living in Brooklyn and on Long Island. Those were the days of Jimmy Roselli, parents and grandparents with heavy accents, and positive Italian role models in the movies, in sports, and entertainment.) But as I read each new issue I was increasingly disappointed in the superficiality of the articles. So, I wrote a letter to the editor and received back an irate note from the publisher basically telling me if I wanted more intellectual articles I should start my own magazine. Eventually I did in 1988 and called it *The Italic Way*—no food, travel, fiction, poetry, or fashion. It was a tool to grow our Italic Institute which was founded the year before.

Over the course of three decades we hoped the magazine, and the Institute, would grow to sizeable numbers. We marketed it with ads in other Italian American publications, with mass mailings, free samples, word-of-mouth, and even radio ads. But we were never able to rise beyond 1,000 members. Part of the problem was its infrequency, at first four issues per year, later one or two. Readers and advertisers prefer magazines with a firm schedule. We never had a marketing department and our national focus limited the number of local merchant ads we could pitch. But the reality of the magazine business is that few can survive on just subscription income. The costs for writing, editing, printing, and mailing are excessive. *The Italic Way* has always been a volunteer effort which enables us to produce an extraordinary product for peanuts.

We could continue publication, we are not in debt, and we certainly haven't exhausted subjects to write about. But we do wonder why after 29 years we have less readers (members) than there were survivors of the Titanic. It's an odd comparison, but that thought came to me this year. There were 704 survivors of the Titanic. Our membership is so much less than that, I'm embarrassed to tell you what it is exactly. Suffice it to say, despite the accolades we receive with every issue the vast ma-

majority of Italian Americans do not see a need for it.

But let's be honest, every Italian American organization is suffering from member loss and the consequent financial strain. It's all about our new age of intermarriage, social media, and instant gratification. The word irrelevant comes to mind. How many young people these days need an ethnic organization? Italic people do not have a proprietary religion like Jews and Greeks that supports a secular unity. We aren't schooled to marry other Italians or to revere a 2,500 year heritage. Most Italian Americans view their heritage in an emotional way rather than intellectually. It took us 29 years to understand that simple fact.

Nevertheless, the Italic Institute will continue in other forms. Though the hard copy version of us will cease to exist, it will live in the ether—on our website, in blogs, on Facebook, in media action, and on Twitter. Our decades of research have not gone to waste. It is available now with only a few keystrokes—books, magazines, videos—a wealth of Italian and Italian American heritage are at your fingertips (and without a mailman).

So, stay with us and spread the word. Now it's all free!

By a Thread, from p.1

an Italian AP test for 2012. The hitch was there must be at least 2,500 students (aka customers) each year. This year, there were 2,774 takers, up from 2,573 in 2015 - that's the 8% increase.

The reality check is to compare Italian with its competition:

Japanese.....	2,481
Italian.....	2,774
German.....	4,945
Latin.....	6,584
Chinese.....	12,524
French.....	22,051
Spanish.....	155,258

“Anyone can see Italian doesn't have much of a future in American schools,” says Institute Director John Mancini. “It's all the more galling that we have 17 million Americans claiming Italian ancestry.”

Mancini points out that only 486 high schools offer the Italian AP, whereas 666 offer Japanese, 1,114 offer Latin, and 1,776 offer Chinese.

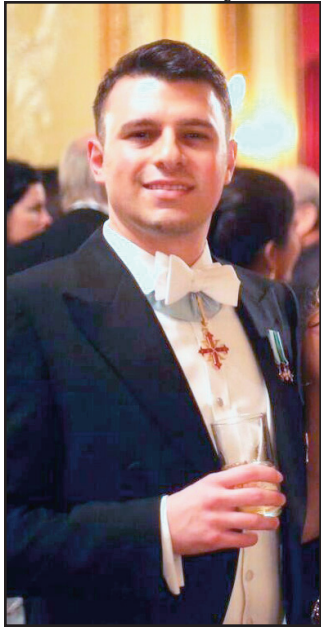
COLUMBUS MUTINY SPREADS

NIAF is Latest to Jump Ship

Who would have guessed that Native Americans now have their biggest ally in the National Italian American Foundation (NIAF)?

NIAF's scurry to the scuppers is being led by CEO John Viola, the new blood that NIAF hopes will help invigorate its image among the younger corporate types—the ones that buy tables and journal ads for its grand galas.

According to Viola's October's blog concerning Columbus Day, he "doesn't have the luxury of exploring the positives and negatives of Columbus's person or historical imprint." All Viola knows is that Columbus Day "by default" is really about "a celebration of our great Italian community."



John Viola, CEO of NIAF, as a Patron Knight of the Savoy Orders. Clearly, he is not a Knight of Columbus.

"As the saying goes, 'what Viola doesn't know about Columbus Day can fill a book,'" laments Senior Analyst Don Fiore. "Here's a guy making about \$200,000 a year, with a staff of 15 people, and claiming to be the voice of 25(sic) million Italian Americans, but he hasn't got the 'luxury' of finding out more about Columbus."

Viola refers to a 2015 conference he called in Washington DC seeking consensus on Columbus Day from diverse members of the so-called Italian American community. He relates that the forum "quickly descended into a screaming match." He concludes that Italian American organizations are unable to reach a consensus, therefore NIAF can dump (our word) Columbus.

His grand scheme is to replace the man who accomplished what no human being had ever done—complete the unification of the planet—with "Italian American Heritage Day"

"Such a scenario" explains the IIA's Rosario Iaconis,

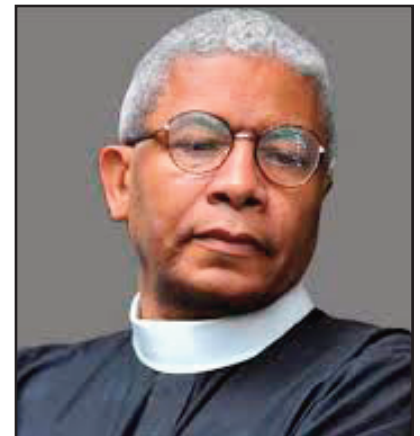
"makes a mockery of history. Columbus Day is neither a religious feast nor an ethnic parade. It is a national American holiday that honors the Italian explorer whose voyage of discovery forever altered Earth's destiny---for the better." (see insert for Iaconis's op-ed)



St. Louis, MO

A stone's throw from NIAF headquarters, the city of Baltimore was considering recasting Columbus Day as "Indigenous Peoples and Italian American Day" This Frankenstein holiday might have dumped Columbus had the National Columbus Celebration Association (NCAA, of which our Institute is a member) not mobilized its Catholic stalwarts with an outstanding appeal to the City Council. Among the tools they used was an article written by African American religious leader Eugene Rivers of Boston. The article was published by the Catholic News Agency (12/2/16), entitled "**Abolishing Columbus Day Will Advance Division and Faulty History .**"

In that article, Rev. Rivers (r) cited a scholar who defended Columbus's historical record as well as pointing out how the holiday was denounced by the KKK at its inception because Columbus was Catholic and Italian.



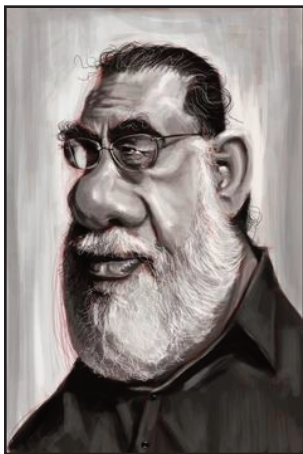
"If there is a lesson here," asserts Institute Director John Mancini, "it is that self-proclaimed leaders of our 'community' need to find the 'luxury' to study history and not pander to multicultural hogwash."

The Italic Institute has previously cited the Columbus Citizens Foundation in NY for expunging Columbus from their parade and Staten Island Borough President James Oddo for the same offense. ****

OUR NEW VIDEO

Once again Francis Ford Coppola has come out from behind his wine barrels to issue his original journal from *The Godfather*. And once again the Italic Institute has produced a video to set the record straight. Produced by former IIA President Bill Dal Cerro, known for his creation of the PBS special on Italian heritage *And They Came to Chicago*, this 2-minute video sums up the damage Coppola has done to Italian American image and values. You can see it on our

website www.italic.org (“Galleria Italica”).



SPAWN OF COPPOLA

The current issue of *The Italic Way* contained two articles on how the Italian American media image is locked into the criminal icons. We all know how Coppola, Scorsese, and Chase solidified that image on film, but at the adolescent level, they spawned video games of the same genre. Here is a rambling summary of the new hit game *Mafia III*, from the internet.

In 1968 Lincoln Clay returns from the Vietnam war now reconnecting with his friends and family in the black mob they are all brutally murdered by the Italian mob now Lincoln in the need of vengeance recruits three different mobsters to help him take out the Italian mob and seek what he calls family.

Not only are the Italians criminals, they are the bad criminals. To think it started with *The Godfather*.



MEMBERS IN ACTION

Anthony D’Urso (pictured) of Long Island pulled off a major election victory for a seat in the NYS Assembly. Tony was born in Formia, Lazio. After a career in government service he undertook 36 trips to Africa, Haiti, and Central America to help people in need. Inspired by the Institute’s first gala tribute to Italian explorers, Tony’s vision and skill led to the creation of a public monument to our explorers in New Hyde Park, NY, with money raised thru the Cellini Lodge, OSIA.



Joseph Graziose of Long Island responding to anti-Italian comments on Jewish social media: *“Italy did more per capita to help Jews during the Shoah than any other country in the world and the Italian Navy airlifted persecuted Libyan Jews to Rome during the 6-Day War.”*

Bill Cerutti of Sacramento, leading a coalition to stop the City Council against renaming Columbus Day, succeeded in stopping the Indigenous initiative.

Changes, from p.1

adults may not wake up at all. They grew up on media images rather than travel and study.”

Rather than providing hardcopy material such as this *Log* and *The Italic Way*, our Institute will be web-based, communicating via website (www.italic.org) and our Facebook and twitter accounts. “We will transition to a think tank, with blogs, press releases, and mass emails,” according to Senior Analyst Alfred Cardone. “We welcome your feedback and hope to attract many internet savvy followers.”

The reality of the computer age is that movements do not need printed newsletters or physical fundraisers to spread ideas. Our Institute has already created a virtual cultural center on the internet—more than any other Italian American organization—complete with archives from the 1930s to history books and original videos.

“And we will continue to be a tax-deductible non-profit. Donations are still welcome,” explains Senior Analyst Bill Dal Cerro.
