



The Founder's Log



Published by The Italic Studies Institute, Inc.

#8, November, 1998

Brian Schiavo, Editor

A Message From Our New York Vice President

Re: New Perspectives

November, 1998

Dear Member,

I thought I would share with you my feelings regarding our Institute's endeavors to promote Italian culture and education through our various programs: *Aurora*, *Project Italia*, and *The Italic Way Magazine*.

As many of you know, I have been an active member of ISI for ten years and have recently accepted the position of Vice President *pro tem* of the New York Council. I have taken on this challenge with the hope that I can make a positive impact on sustaining the membership and funding our educational programs.

My paramount goal is to continue our work of educating the Italian-American Community and the public-at-large about the tremendous contributions and positive accomplishments Italians have made to society. These goals should not be weakened by internal politics or personal priorities. If we really believe in the legacy we have inherited, then we need to promote the aims of the Institute in a unified way.

As in most worthy charitable causes, our existence depends upon funding, and the commitment of time by the membership. Although we have been able to sustain the Institute's ability to continue its work during 1998, next year will be a difficult time for us—unless we renew our support and increase our membership.

With this in mind, I welcome your active support, and any ideas you may have. Please feel free to call me at the Institute at (516) 488-7400.

Sincerely,

Vincent J. Pizzulli
Vice President, *pro tem*

DINNER DANCE 1999

The Italic Studies Institute is pleased to announce that our 12th Annual Dinner Dance Gala will be held on Saturday, May 8th, 1999 at the Waldorf Astoria. We hope that you will mark your calendar accordingly. Set aside this date for a special evening of dining, dancing and socializing. This fundraising event will help to support the Institute's programs and goals. This dinner promises to be one of our most exciting ever.

We welcome your participation. Please send us job opportunities, new employment, personals or any other news item of interest.

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NATIONAL IMPACT

Along with all the major Italian-American organizations, ISI is a member of NIACA (National Italian American Coordinating Association). On Saturday, October 17th, NIACA voted to begin the implementation of the ISI-drafted Italian-American Agenda. Each president has agreed to publish the Agenda in his respective newsletter and state his support for its 14 points. There was a general consensus that Italian-American politicians need to be more proactive in support of our goals. This, in itself, is a major step in unifying our efforts.

It should also be noted that leaders of organizations like Unico, NIAF, FIERI, and the Sons of Italy acknowledged the influence of *The Italic Way* on the community's leadership. One president proudly stated that he reads each issue two or three times and that it was superior to all the other magazines in depth and content. Even our Aurora Youth Program elicited requests from three presidents for material and proposals.

Clearly, ISI is the vanguard in many areas.

A&E CABLE PRODUCTION

For those of you who had the opportunity to watch A&E's *Italians in America* last month, you can attest to the fact that it was many cuts above the lightweight fare that passes for ethnic history on other channels. It was the first time that our history was presented in any kind of balanced light. Among the dark periods that were covered included the New Orleans Mass Lynching of 1891, Sacco & Vanzetti, and the WW II persecution of West Coast Italians.

But, this type of program does not happen on its own. Its production was the direct result of a unified protest by the major organizations after A&E had broadcast a "Gangster Week" of mob biographies. Not only did A&E agree to produce this film, but they agreed to use community scholars to review it and to star in it. Drs. Joseph Scelsa and Philip Cannistraro of City University of NY (they are also on our Advisory Council) put in cameo appearances and made sure that there was plenty of intellectual meat in the production.

This major achievement in media was attributable, in good part, to the Sons of Italy's Commission for Social Justice (John Dabbene), FIERI (Michael Rodi, John Calvelli), and the above mentioned scholars.

The lesson: Don't apathetically accept negative media depictions. Besides, it didn't cost Italian-Americans a dime to produce.

POLITICAL ACTION

As the Italian American Agenda circulates among our political representatives, it awakens their spirit of solidarity. Two cases in point are press releases recently posted by Peter Vallone, President of New York's City Council and gubernatorial candidate, as well as by the New York State Conference of Italian-American Legislators, led by Senator Serafin Maltese. Mr. Vallone demanded that the U.S. Postal Service squash any plans for a *Godfather* (the movie) commemorative stamp. Senator Maltese condemned the adolescent and defamatory movie *Mafia!*

We haven't seen this sort of political concern for forty years. Things may be changing. Once we all speak in one loud voice, things will most definitely change for the better.

To Vallone and Maltese we say-mobilize all of our political power soon. And thank you for caring.

INSTITUTE LAUNCHES ITAL-TEL PROGRAM

In an effort to establish an on-going fundraising method, ISI is launching ITAL-TEL, a great way to have our members save on long distance calls and pagers while earning ISI incentive fees.

Here's how it works: If you have a business that uses long distance, or if you use it at home to call friends and relatives, just look at your AT&T, Sprint, or MCI phone bill. Are you on a ten cents a minute plan? If you are, you're probably paying, at least, \$4.95 each month to maintain the plan. If you are not on a plan, then you're paying a lot more than ten cents a minute.

It might pay to transfer your long distance service to our carrier, Excel, the quiet company that is one of the Big Four (AT&T, Sprint, MCI, Excel). It will cost you just \$5.00 to switch carriers and only \$1 a month for Excel's ten cents a minute plan. Calls to Italy are just \$.28 a minute ANYTIME.

What's more, every customer ISI brings in means income for us. Everytime you or your business makes a long distance call, ISI gets a 2% commission from Excel. But you still pay the lowest rates in the industry.

Does your company use pagers? We can supply pagers at competitive prices and bill you on your phone bill. Why deal with a Pagenet and risk sudden cut-offs if their bill isn't paid?

Here is an opportunity to help the Institute and join the long distance revolution with ITAL-TEL. For information, call us at (516) 488-7400. It may be your last expensive long-distance call!

APPEAL RESPONSE

We thank the following members for their generous reponse to our national appeal:

John M. Fiore

Cafe Italia

Frank C. Cardone

Richard J. Vannucci

Charles J. Cerutti

Rose Mary P. Auteri

Concrete Workers District

Louis J. Merola

Council #16 of NY

SPECIAL DONATIONS

Although we asked our members to contribute \$50 each in support of our expansion, some of you went well beyond the call. We are especially grateful to the following for their special generosity.

Major Donors (\$500-\$1,000)

Joseph J. Corso, Staten Island, NY

Viola Cirio, Phoenix, AZ

Italian Club of Staten Island

Benefactors (\$1,000-\$2,000)

Joseph Fay, Bronx, NY (In memory of parents

Rosina and Giuseppe Fiorito)

Joseph Fay's donation will fund 25 scholarships to this year's Aurora class in the Bronx. The donation of the Italian Club of Staten Island will fund scholarships to the Aurora class in Staten Island. Viola Cirio's donation will also fund Aurora scholarships at various sites. She has written to us:

Kudos to your Aurora Program! Please use this check towards the Program in which young Italian-American children are learning the Italian language. Buona fortuna!

Joseph Corso's donation will help us upgrade our office computers -- the tools of our trade.

We can only say that members such as these make our daily sacrifices meaningful.

Whether you give \$50 or thousands of dollars, the message to ISI is: "We support your work, we believe in what you are doing." That is pure inspiration!

NOVEMBER ALMANAC

The ninth month of the year, until the Romans moved New Year's from March to January.

- Nov. 5 - Ella T. Grasso was elected governor of Connecticut in 1974. The first female elected as a governor in the United States.
- Nov. 7 - Patriot Giuseppe Garibaldi turns Southern Italy over to King Victor Emanuel in 1860 with a handshake, after having liberated it from the Spanish Bourbons. The following year, Garibaldi was offered a commission as general in the Union Army by President Lincoln.
- Nov. 10 - In 1494, the first book of accounting was published by Fra Luca Pacioli. It explained to the world the Italian method of double-entry bookkeeping, a mainstay of today's capitalist society.
- Nov. 15 - In the year 1512, Michelangelo's ceiling painting in the Sistine Chapel was first seen by the general public.
- Nov. 18 - Comedienne Imogene Coca, famous co-performer with Sid Caesar during the 1950's, was born in 1908.
- Nov. 19 - In 1941, the Italian Army's crack Ariete Division fought a gallant defense against overwhelming British & Empire forces at El Gobi in the Western Desert. Their stand allowed Rommel's Afrika Corps to safely retreat.
- Nov. 21 - The Verrazzano-Narrows Bridge was dedicated in 1964. The longest suspension bridge in the world was named after Italian explorer Giovanni da Verrazzano, who first sailed into New York Harbor in 1524, for the French.
- Nov. 25 - Joltin' Joe DiMaggio, baseball great, was born in 1914, in Martinez, California.
- Nov. 27 - Italian physicist Giovanni Giorgi was born in 1871. He developed the Giorgi International System of Measurement (also known as "mksa") He contributed greatly to hydroelectric technology, urban trolley development and electrical distribution networks.
- Nov. 29 - Composer Giacomo Puccini (*Madama Butterfly*) died in 1924 before completing *Turandot*.

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Inside This Issue:

- Political Action!
- ITAL-TEL Program!
- Special Donations!