



UPDATE

Italic Institute of America

"Italian Pride on a Classical Foundation"

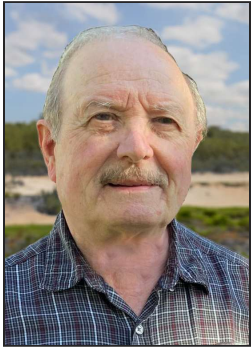
September, 2026

www.italic.org



Food for Thought

by John Mancini, Executive Director



As our community ages so do we. I submit to you my latest photograph as evidence! Excuse the attire.

It's been almost 40 years that our Institute has spearheaded the "Classical Italian" movement. In truth, we are not only the spearhead but the armor and shield as well—no other organization provides the depth and access to the knowledge necessary for a well-rounded Italian American.

Our cuisine is a huge part of Italian American culture, so much so that it too often defines how we see ourselves. If it weren't for pizza and Chicken Parm, our younger generations would hardly know what Italy gave the world.

Sounds absurd to us, but there is very little depth of knowledge in our "community." Show the cartoon below to most people and they'd be stumped by the humor. Today, all history is a blur and Italian history a bridge too far.

It was recognizing this reality that we founded the Italic Institute. Our product is food for thought. We have always been a Think-Tank, not a social group, or a foundation, or a charitable entity. Our mission has always been to disseminate knowledge, not recipes, not travel tips. We don't compete with other organizations nor do they support us financially or always like our opinions.

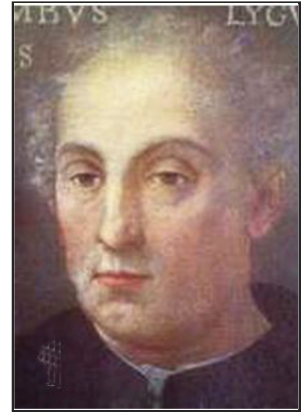
The lifetimes my colleagues and I have spent on research and analysis were not wasted but are digitized on our website, available to any and all with no charge or secret password.

And when we add in the cost of \$8.62 to send you two *Updates* per year, have we earned at least a small donation?

Is This the Admiral?

The greatest frustration in documenting Italian history is not knowing what Christopher Columbus looked like.

Six years ago, we published three images of Cristoforo Colombo comparing them to a portrait of his son Hernando and verbal descriptions of his father by him and by Spanish contemporaries. Our simple comparison of the portraits to those descriptions led us to choose the image to the right.



Recently, we delved into the origin of this portrait and found that it came from the collection of Renaissance bishop and doctor Paolo Giovio (1483 -1552). He was wealthy enough to hire artists to locate portraits of famous people and reproduce them for his collection which he began in 1512, just six years after the Admiral died.

What adds to the validity of this portrait is that Giovio was a stickler for authenticity. "Idealized portraits would not suffice," one website claimed. Through correspondence and

agents across Europe he insisted on portraits done in life or reflected in eye-witness accounts such as the one Hernando gave of his father:

The admiral was a well-made man, of a height above the medium, with a long face, and cheek-bones some what prominent; neither too fat nor too lean. He had an aquiline nose, light-colored eyes, and a ruddy complexion. In his youth he had been fair, and his hair was of a light color, but after he was thirty years old it turned white."

The portrait above fits these observations best. Giovio had the means and the network to find a truer image.



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It's a Small World

In our last *Update* we profiled Lt. Pasquale Aceto, great uncle of our Design Editor Andrew Ricci. Aceto died of wounds during the battle for the Philippines in 1944. It was a tribute limited to subscribers to our Institute.

So, we were surprised by an email from a lady in Washington, DC. It seems that while going through her late father's possessions she found a picture of him with two young men in ROTC uniforms. With it, he had written "1941: On the right my best friend Pasquale R. Aceto." (This was only months before Pearl Harbor.)

Most people would have tossed the memento, but Jill Bogard also found a certificate attesting that her father Solomon was a charter member of The National World War II Museum "in honor of 2Lt Pasquale Aceto."

That her father had such reverence for his best friend prompted Jill to search the internet to find relatives of Lt. Aceto. That's when she found our newsletter and mailed us her father's documents. An exceptional lady!



Solomon Bogard (center) worked as a civilian for the War Dept.

ROTC cadet Aceto is on the near right. His active service photo is at the far left.

Service to the Max!

The Fedele family of Rochester, NY was emblematic of the Italian American devotion to country during World War II. Of 11 sons, 8 took up arms and 2 worked in defense plants.



They served in every branch, on every front. One was wounded on Okinawa in 1945.

Bucking the odds, two brothers crossed paths in Africa, and two met on Iwo Jima.

All returned home for this photo at war's end.

Italy at 80, Finding its Groove

The Italian Republic turned 80 this year, not an easy eight decades to be sure. It was launched in 1946 after a devastating war. It went through the "economic miracle" of the 1950s and 60s, the "Years of Lead" during the 1970s when Red Brigades terrorized the nation, and the "Tangentopoli" of 80s and 90s when bribes fueled governance. It took the *Mani Pulite* (Clean Hands) trials to put the Republic back on track.



Up to its senior years the Republic was known for revolving governments, the zero-filled Lira, and political parties that changed their names rather than their platforms. Communists became Democrats, neo-Fascists became Brothers of Italy.

Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni hails from the Brothers of Italy Party and has held office for almost 4 years, a veritable record. Opposition leader "Elly" Schlein leads the Democratic Party (neo-Communists). She is Jewish on her father's side, holds citizenship in Italy, Switzerland and the U.S., and is bi-sexual, living with a female.

It's safe to say that with the adoption of the Euro, membership in the European Union, and center-right rule, the Republic has matured into a stable and reliable global player. Italian corporations have become economic powerhouses.

Banking giant Unicredit took control of its German rival Commerzbank, giving it access to Central and Eastern Europe while serving over 20 million clients. Petroleum superstar ENI controls much of Europe's natural gas with firm ties to sources in the eastern Mediterranean and North Africa. (The Republic owns 33% of ENI.) Luxury brands like Prada and Ferrari are doing well globally with good sales in the U.S.

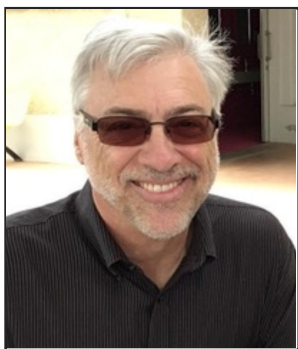
The Republic's demographics were out of control until the center-right coalition denied entry to refugee and charity boats landing on Italian islands. Still, immigrants make up about 11% of the population. New laws further restrict Italian citizenship for refugees and even for diaspora Italic people claiming ancestral roots.

Italian courts finalized the sentencing of Pakistani family members who murdered a daughter in 2021—an "honor killing"—that shocked the nation. Defending Italian culture and Western ways are priorities on the Republic's agenda.

Confirming Italy's expertise in space technology, astronaut Luca Parmitano will be a crew member on NASA's Artemis III moon landing in 2027.

As Go the Teeth...

The *Wall Street Journal* recently cited the work of Dr. Frank Scannapieco (below), a professor of Dentistry at the University of Buffalo. He is an oral biologist who has co-written a 2023 study linking chronic diseases like diabetes, Alzheimers, heart disease, some cancers, and even pneumonia to the lack of oral hygiene.

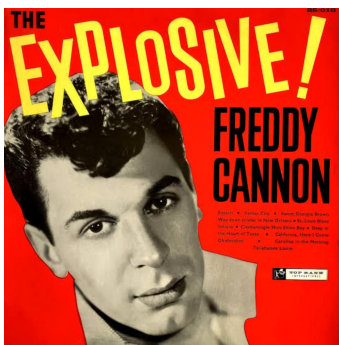


He contends that mouth bacteria and gum disease can find their way into the blood stream to

cause general inflammation, which can accelerate other bodily diseases. Beside the usual precautions of daily brushing and twice-a-year dental cleaning, Dr. Scannapieco supports daily use of floss and soft-picks to clear out food particles between teeth.

Of special interest, his study showed a 10% reduced risk of hospital-related pneumonia if you visit a dentist a year before a hospital procedure and 30% lower risk if you have an oral exam within six months of hospitalization. In short, dentist first, then the operation. “As go the teeth, so go the bones!”

Sic Transit Gloria Italica



Freddy “Boom Boom” Cannon, 89, was born Frederick Anthony Picariello Jr., and made his way into Rock ‘n’ Roll stardom in the U.S. and Britain. His nickname derived from the constant drumbeats in his recordings.

His breakout song was *Tallahassee Lassie* in 1960 which

caught Dick Clark’s attention. It was later followed with an old ditty, *Way Down Yonder in New Orleans*. Teens in the Metro New York area thrilled to his now famous *Palisades Park* in 1962, with its rollercoaster sounds. His *Abigail Beecher* (“the history teacher”) made the charts in 1964.

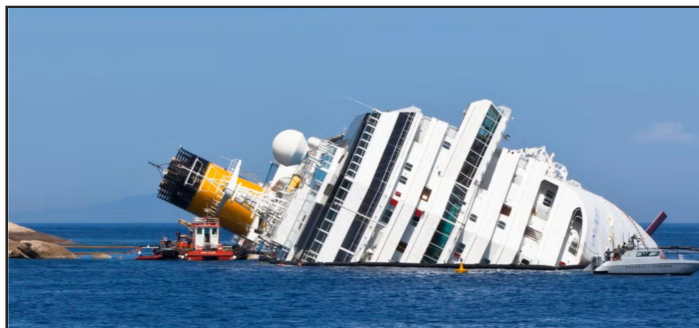
Cav. Philip DiNovo, 92, was an economics professor with an MBA at SUNY (State University of NY) but his true calling was preserving and promoting his Italian heritage.

He founded the American Italian Heritage Museum in 1985 in Albany and sustained it with every resource. He also researched and wrote articles for Italian American publications on a regular and frequent basis.



Costa Concordia Revelations

Netflix released a documentary in July titled *Shipwrecked: Nightmare at Sea*. It is a disturbing remembrance of the tragic sinking of the Costa Concordia cruise ship in 2012 off the Italian coast. Using passenger cellphone footage, survivor interviews, and the ship’s black box audio, it’s enough to scare you out of your next pleasure cruise.



The documentary recounts how Capt. Francesco Schettino veered off the standard course between the Italian islands of Giglio and Santo Stefano to conduct a personal “sail by” to impress someone on Giglio. Mind you, it was already dark and the island has a rocky shoreline. The normal course was nearly 5 miles from the island, but Schettino brought the ship to within half a mile of shore.

When he realized the danger, he ordered the helmsman to quickly steer the ship’s stern away from the coast. Instead, the helmsman steered into it. Schettino caught the error but it took 13 seconds for the helmsman to react—too late!

Something the public didn’t know at the time was that not everyone on the bridge was Italian. The helmsman was Indonesian (Jacob Rusli Bin). Language was certainly a problem. In fact, as in air travel, English is the required language of international cruise lines. Schettino ordered “port!,” Jacob called back “starboard!” Was it a hearing or language problem?

Netflix reported that University of Pisa engineers reviewing the accident asserted that Schettino’s order, if followed immediately, would have prevented the collision or caused only minor damage. However, an Italian admiral at Schettino’s trial testified that the crash was inevitable so close to shore.



Schettino (right) is now serving a 16-year imprisonment. The helmsman got off with less than 2 years. Ultimately, it was Schettino’s decision to reroute the ship that led to all other consequences.

There were heroes that awful night including Giuseppe Girolamo, a 30-year-old musician and drummer who gave up his own place in a lifeboat to a young family with children, sacrificing his life even though he could not swim.

Message to the Media



**Senior Analyst
Bill Dal Cerro
is doing
yeoman's work
for our commu-
nity by calling
out the media
when they
participate in
defamation.**

Chicago Tribune

SATURDAY, JUNE 13, 2026

Stereotyping Italian Americans

In her otherwise lovely June 3 tribute ("All in the family") to restaurant immigrant families in Chicago, reporter Eva Remijan-Toba brings up Al Capone when talking about Tufano's Vernon Park Tap but makes no mention of Asian criminals when talking about Sun Wah.

Neither immigrant family should be linked to violent gangsters, of course. That goes without saying.

My point is that Italian Americans continue to have an unfair albatross hang-

ing around their necks via organized crime.

The On Leong Tong operated in Chicago during Capone's era but did so quietly. Federal agents were more enthralled with the publicity-seeking Capone.

In fact, the largest gangland massacre in U.S. history happened not in Chicago (the St. Valentine's Day Massacre in 1929) but in Seattle in 1983 (the Wah Mee Massacre).

The continuing fascination with Capone calls to mind a quote by the great journalist Harry Golden Sr. in 1957: "The Italian American has become a stereotype of the gangster. This is not only unfair but untrue."

Still unfair. Still untrue.

— Bill Dal Cerro, Chicago

Miss these Blogs?

We share our knowledge and opinions with weekly blogs. If you haven't subscribed to them yet, just go to our website and join subscribers around the country. Double-click the author's photo to access his previous blogs. You can even post your comments on them.

Family Affairs (August 17th) - a review of the book *Mussolini's Daughter*.

Their Song Ended too Soon (August 13th) - noting the short careers of Russ Columbo, Mario Lanza, and Bobby Darin.

An Odyssey or Oddity (August 10th) - a movie review of *The Odyssey*.

De Mortuis Nil Nisi Bonum (August 7th) - reflections on the death of mob-star Vincent Pastore.

A Brooklyn Nightmare (August 3rd) - a review of the new book *Gowanus Crossing*.

Why the Mystery?

We have documented on page 2 our community's military service during the Second World War. Our contribution was mainly to the lower ranks with no Italian American achieving the rank of general. Nor were there any Italian American generals in the Korean War or the First World War. Our climb to leadership began with the Cold War.

Recently, 4-star General Christopher LaNeve was appointed Acting U.S. Army Chief of Staff. We suspect that he is now the highest ranking Italian American in the U.S. military. But none of his bios report his ethnicity, even though his hometown is Pittsburgh, which is heavily Italic, and his surname means "snow" in Italian.

It is sort of the same with the current Commander, U.S. Pacific forces Admiral Samuel Paparo. Born in Pennsylvania with an Italian surname, opinions on his ethnicity slant more toward Scotch-Irish than Italic.

We would like to hear LaNeve and Paparo publicly claim Italian roots but even getting Florida Governor Ron DeSantis to tout his roots in the Boot is a chore.



**General
Christopher LaNeve**



**General
Christopher Cavoli**



Adm. Samuel Paparo



Adm. John Aquilino

Anyway, we can confirm that one of Admiral Paparo's predecessors, as Pacific Commander (2021 to 2024) Admiral John Aquilino, was definitely an Italian American from Long Island.

Likewise, 4-Star General Christopher Cavoli, who recently retired as NATO Commander in Europe (2020-2025) is also Italic. He is the son of an Italian-American army officer and grew up in Germany, Rome, Verona, and Vicenza.

Cavoli's top priorities during his tenure were overseeing assistance to Ukraine starting from the 2022 Russian invasion, and implementing new NATO defense plans.

We intend to contact Gen. LaNeve and Adm. Paparo to confirm their ethnicity.