

# Ambassador

A Publication of the National Italian American Foundation

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## THE UNIFICATION OF ITALY

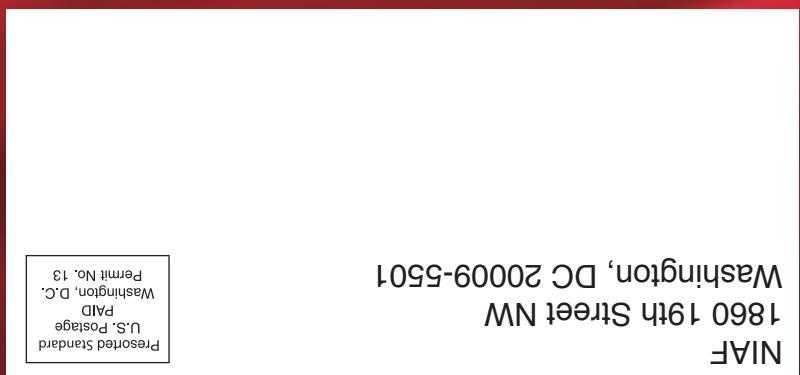


CELEBRATING ITALY'S 150TH ANNIVERSARY

HISTORY OF ITALIAN UNITY MADE EASIER

ON BECOMING ITALIAN

APPRECIATION: JOSEPH R. CERRELL



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# Ambassador

A Publication of the National Italian American Foundation

Vol. 22, No. 3 • [www.niaf.org](http://www.niaf.org)

## Features

### Events Celebrating Italy's 150th Anniversary

On March 17, 1861, Italy became one nation after almost a half century of struggle called il Risorgimento. Italy@150 celebrates Italy's 150th anniversary throughout the United States with events that are turning 2011 into an "Italian year."

*Foreword by Giulio Terzi di Sant'Agata, Ambassador of Italy to the United States*



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The Nation's Capital is brushing up on its Italian this spring and summer with a citywide festival of exhibitions, theater productions and activities that are just the ticket for observing Italy's 150th anniversary.

*By Don Oldenburg*

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Italian unification is celebrated every March 17, the day in 1861 when Victor Emmanuel II was proclaimed the first King of Italy. But as simple as that crowning moment may sound, not much leading up to the historic day that would shape the modern nation of Italy proves to be *semplice*.

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When Joe Cerrell died in early December, the world lost more than a legendary public affairs consultant. Joe was a powerbroker whose list of close friends and clients read like a Who's Who. He was also a media guru, professor, mentor, businessman, proud Italian American, devoted family man, and so much more.

*By Don Oldenburg*



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Jerry Colangelo, Chairman  
John Marino, National Executive Director

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# From the NIAF Chairman



Another bone-chilling winter for many of us is over, and once again hope springs eternal with the return of balmy weather, blossoms and baseball. Springtime also marks the return of NIAF's West Coast Gala on May 19 in sunny Santa Monica, Calif., an annual event of fine dining, good friends, and our shared Italian American heritage that you won't want to miss.

This issue of Ambassador previews the spring Gala's exciting, celebrity-filled program and its remarkable honorees in the NIAF News section, along with coverage of recent NIAF events from Capitol Hill to Chicago and elsewhere.

The theme of this issue, however, is of historic proportions: This is the 150th Anniversary of Italy. Ironically, in the same year 150 years ago when the United States was struggling through civil war to remain united, Italy was struggling to become united. Both succeeded, attesting again to the long and enduring bond between these two nations and their people.

Observing Italy's important anniversary, NIAF and the Italian American Congressional Delegation will host a congressional reception on Capitol Hill on March 17. And we're proud to include a calendar of "Italy@150" events, exhibitions and activities throughout the United States in 2011, with a foreword by Italy's Ambassador to the United States Giulio Terzi di Sant'Agata. In addition, there's an article that makes the complicated history, personalities and intrigue of the Risorgimento and Italy's unification a little easier to understand.

Also in this issue is a gratifying story of how NIAF cultural grants helped the Italian Film Festival USA to expand from its modest beginning, from showing three Italian movies in St. Louis in 2005 to bringing a half dozen films to 10 U.S. cities this

year. If your appetite is calling for homemade traditional Italian cuisine, try the recipes Ciao Italia columnist Mary Ann Esposito has cooked up in this issue for the Feast of St. Joseph. And, we welcome the first appearance in our pages of veteran USA Today writer Marco della Cava who writes of his nearly lifelong and passionate pursuit of his Italian heritage and, in recent years, dual citizenship.

Looking back at 2010, NIAF is proud of its many accomplishments, including taking the nationwide leading role in saving the Advance Placement Italian Language test by issuing a \$500,000 challenge grant that was followed by a \$250,000 gift from former member of Congress and NIAF Chairman Emeritus Frank J. Guarini. NIAF also fulfilled its Abruzzo Earthquake Relief initiative. We contributed to scholarships for more than 200 students and provided grants to 31 deserving Italian American cultural and academic projects. And, we brought 34 students on the Ambassador Peter F. Secchia Voyage of Discovery Program, and sponsored 52 Italian students through the NIAF Adopt-A-Student Abruzzo program.

For more than 35 years, NIAF has distinguished itself as a heritage-based organization as well as a networking resource for Italian American of all walks of life. No matter your field, NIAF welcomes you to join us at our wide variety of events, programs and opportunities and help support our mission of promoting Italian American heritage and culture and keeping it alive for the next generation.

On behalf of NIAF, I thank you for your support of our organization in 2010.

  
Jerry Colangelo, NIAF Chairman

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March 28	April 18	May 9	May 23
May 30	June 6	June 13	June 20
Sept. 12	Oct. 3	Oct. 10	



# Reader Feedback on Previous Issue of Ambassador

## Where did Christmas go?

Lucky to be both Italian and American, we say "Buon Natale" and "Merry Christmas" to our family members and to our non-Italian (and non-Christian) friends as well. But it was very hard to find either phrase mentioned in your "Happy Holidays" issue (Ambassador, Vol. 22, No. 2), except for a crossword puzzle and one of the recipes.

I can't wait to see how much more politically correct you will try to be next year. But in the meantime, I have my aluminum pole ready and wish you all "Happy Festivus."

—Dr. Albert F. Marra

Virginia Beach, VA

## Contact Us

### Ambassador Editorial

Send comments and questions with a subject line of "Ambassador Lettere" via e-mail to AmbassadorMagazine@niasf.org, by fax to 202-387-0800 or by mail to Ambassador Lettere, The NIAF, 1860 19th Street NW, Washington DC 20009.

Please include your name, address and daytime phone number. All submissions become property of *Ambassador* and may be published in our magazine or on our website, [www.niasf.org](http://www.niasf.org).

Letters may be edited for clarity, space or to remove objectionable content.

## Brava Diversity!

I always enjoy the variety and caliber of articles you offer and you exceeded my expectations with your article on Italy's first female rabbi. It brought to life the fascinating histories I have read regarding Jews in Italy and rekindled a recent happy memory of spending an entire day at the beautiful Jewish Temple in Rome. This is truly an article that celebrates our diversity and your professionalism.

—June Radicchi

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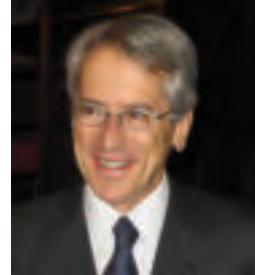


*Under the auspices of the President of the Republic of Italy*

On March 17, 1861, Italy became one nation after almost a half century of struggle, il Risorgimento. Italy@150 celebrates Italy's 150th anniversary in Washington, DC, and throughout the United States, with a series of activities—organized under the auspices of the President of the Republic of Italy—that turns 2011 into an "Italian year."

The unique partnership between Italy and the United States is a common wealth of values, historical ties, and cultural and human relations. This shared identity dates back to the time when our two nations had not even been created yet. Its roots can be found in the legacy of Florentine Renaissance. It developed in the arts, sciences and political thinking also through the lives and ideas of great figures like Andrea Palladio and Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin and Gaetano Filangieri, Giuseppe Garibaldi and Abraham Lincoln.

A year-and-a-half-long celebration in the United States of Italy's unity, Italy@150, is thus also a recognition of a friendship between two countries and two peoples united in promoting freedom, peace and democracy.



Giulio Terzi di Sant'Agata  
Ambassador of Italy to the United States

## *Major Upcoming Events Celebrating Italy's 150th Anniversary*

For a complete list of events, please visit: [www.ambwashingtondc.esteri.it/150](http://www.ambwashingtondc.esteri.it/150)

### **Washington D.C.**

#### **February 12 – May 15, 2011 | Phillips Collection**

*Philip Guston, Roma*—40 paintings completed during his stay in Rome, inspired by de Chirico, Fellini, Piero della Francesca

#### **February 20 – May 30, 2011 | National Gallery Of Art**

*Venice: Canaletto and His Rivals*—The rivalries that pitted Canaletto and his fellow painters through 60 view paintings

#### **February 26 – March 19, 2011 | Washington National Opera**

*Puccini's Madama Butterfly*—One of the world's beloved operas returns in a beautiful production from the San Francisco Opera.

#### **March 17, 2011 | Embassy Of Italy**

*Verdi's Music of The Risorgimento and Puccini's Arias*—The myth of Verdi as Il Risorgimento's composer, and arias by Giacomo Puccini

#### **March 23, 2011 | Renwick Gallery – Smithsonian American Art Museum**

*Tagliapietra E Vitali: Masters of the Medium*—exhibition

#### **April 1, 2011 | Embassy Of Italy**

*Canaletto And His Influence On European Paintings*—In collaboration with The National Gallery Of Art

#### **April 17, 2011 | National Museum Of American History**

*Big Concert With Five Stradivari*—music of Luigi Cherubini and Luigi Boccherini

#### **May 13-27, 2011 | Washington National Opera**

*Donizetti's Don Pasquale*—directed by Leon Major and produced by the NYC Opera

#### **June 2 – Sept. 6, 2011 | National Geographic Museum**

*The Etruscans: Uncovering An Ancient Civilization*—The daily life of the Etruscans through audio and video, in collaboration with the Società Contemporanea Progetti in Florence

#### **June 2011 | National Gallery Of Art**

*"Open Roads"* film review

#### **September 2011 | Bernardo Bertolucci:**

*Retrospective*—In collaboration with The National Gallery of Art

### **Boston**

#### **March 18, 2011, 11.30am | State House**

*Unification Of Italy, Commemoration Day*—with the Lieutenant Governor, Speaker of the House and Mayor of Boston

#### **April 8, 2011 | Boston Symphony Hall**

*Notte Tricolore Concert*—Orchestra Sinfonica Europa Unita

#### **October 2011 | Museum Of Fine Arts**

*"Il Culto di Afrodite"*—Masterpieces from the museums of Rome and Naples

#### **October 25, 2011 | Museum Of Fine Arts**

*"Il Culto Di Afrodite"*—Masterpieces from the Museums of Rome and Naples

#### **October 28 – 29 2011 | Sackler Museum**

*Vasari 500: Envisioning New Directions In Vasari Studies*—Symposium on the life and work of Vasari on the 500th anniversary of his birth ►

## **Detroit**

**January 13 – May 20, 2011 | Western Reserve University Americhe—Photographic exhibit by Francesco Nonino**

## **Houston**

**January 27 – March 30, 2011 | Texas A&M University Film Festival about The Risorgimento**

**March, 2011 | Houston High Schools**

*Film—Un Percorso tra i Siti Italiani Patrimonio Mondiale dell'Unesco*

**March – April, 2011 | Italian Communities Cultural Center**

*Cinema—“Il Gattopardo” by Luchino Visconti, with introduction by Houston University Prof. A. Carrera*

**April 2, 2011 | Dallas Opera**

*Rigoletto By Giuseppe Verdi*

## **Los Angeles**

**January 20 – March 19, 2011 | Italian Cultural Institute in Westwood**

*Exhibition of a charcoal sketch of Palazzo dei Congressi in Venice, Travel Sketches of Italy by renowned architect Louis I. Kahn.*

**March 7 – May 2, 2011 | IIC, Chapman University and University Of Oklahoma**

*Contemporary Literature with Dacia Maraini, Enri De Luca, Giuseppe Conte, Paolo Giordano E Giorgio Pressburger*

**March 17, 2011 | Italian Cultural Institute**

*Theatre Production about the History and Traditions of Italy*

**April 12, 2011 | Italian Cultural Institute**

*Photography – Historical Photos of Rome in 1849, by Stefano Lecchi from the Getty Research Institute*

**April 28 – 30, 2011 | UCLA and Italian Cultural Institute**

*Symposium on Francesco De Sanctis and unified Italy*

**June 4, 2011 | Italian Cultural Institute**

*Art, Photography, Design – Biennial of Venice: the Italian Pavilion in the World Presentation of Local Italian Artists*

**June 15 – 30, 2011 | Italian Cultural Institute**

*Literature—Itinerant reading of “I Promessi Sposi”*

## **New Jersey**

**March 17, 2011 | Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ**

*“La Breccia Di Porta Pia” by Edmondo de Amicis—Book presentation and celebration of Italy's unification*

**June 4, 2011 | Princeton University, Princeton, NJ**

*“Concerto Per La Repubblica”—Verdi's repertory in celebration of the 150 years of the Italian Republic*

## **New York**

**March 17, 2011 | The School of Italy, G. Marconi Auditorium**

*“Risorgimento Day, March 17th 1861-2011”—Presentation by students on The Risorgimento, with excerpt from the documentary, “Garibaldi Eroe Romantico E Moderno” by Paola Gallo*

**April 11, 2011 | Italian Academy at Columbia University**

*Unification Of Italy And American Independence—Philosophy and law as the basis of two government states*

## **October 2011 | Italian Cultural Institute**

*The Italian Genius and the American Industrial Development—150 years of the Italian Unity, international conference*

## **Philadelphia**

**March 16 – June 5, 2011 | Philadelphia Museum of Art**

*Inauguration of the Exhibition—“Roberto Capucci: Art into Fashion”*

**March 18 – 19, 2011 | Philadelphia Italian Consulate**

**General, Oak Room**

*Presentation of Italian films and documentaries on the history of Italian fashion from 1860 until the present day*

**March 25, 2011 | Philosophical Society of Philadelphia**

*“Unity of Italy and America: A 150-Year Bridge”—*

*a seminar of political, historical and philosophical studies*

**March 27 – June, 2011 | Philadelphia Museum of Art**

*Presentation of a series of Italian films in connection with the exhibition: “Roberto Capucci: Art into Fashion”*

**April 1, 2011 | Philadelphia Museum Of Art, Hall**

*Fashion show by students of fashion schools and universities—models inspired by Italian designer Capucci*

**April 5 – 7, 2011 | Philadelphia Italian Consulate General, Oak Room**

*“Italy's Unity Seen by Cinema”—a presentation on Italian films on “Risorgimento,” in conjunction with the America-Italy Society*

**April 15 – 16 2011 | University Of Pennsylvania**

*From The Unification of Italy to The Unity of the “Italici”—Languages of “Italicita” in the world, international conference organized by Fabio Finotti, director, Center for Italian Studies*

## **San Francisco**

**March 2 – May 29, 2011 | Cantor Museum at Stanford University**

*Exhibit of Tiepolo's drawings*

**March 20, 2011 | Italian American Museum**

*Italia Unita Da Concetto A Realtà—Conference presented by Mario Purpura (UC Berkeley), Steven Botterill (UC Berkeley), Giancarlo Aquilanti (Stanford) and Massimo Mazzotti (UC Berkeley)*

**March 23, 2011 | Italian Cultural Institute**

*150 Years Of Italy Through Documents And Memorabilia—From the Italian public libraries of Rome and Naples*

**March 23 – April 14, 2011 | Italian Cultural Institute**

*Portrait of a Nation—L'Italia del Risorgimento, Documentation from the California Historical Society and the Baccari Archives*

**March 29, April 5, 12 and 19, 2011 | Italian Cultural Institute**

*Festival of Risorgimento Themed Movies*

**March 31, 2011 | Italian Cultural Institute**

*The Music Of Risorgimento—Lecture and concert*

## **Florida**

**March 16, 2011 | Italian Cultural Institute**

*Baroque Painting In Lombardy—*

*Rare paintings from the “Pinacoteca di Brera”*

**March 20, 2011 | Sarasota Opera House**

*Concert celebrating the 150th Anniversary ▲*



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**A** Admire DC's Italian-accented architecture: the stunning frescoes on the **Capitol dome**, painted by Constantino Brumidi, the neoclassical monuments on the **National Mall**, the striking style of the **Watergate**, the simple elegance of the **Embassy of Italy** and more.

**B** Honor the 150th anniversary of Italy's unification by examining how Italian Americans have left their mark on DC, from the Piccirilli brothers who carved the statue at the **Lincoln Memorial** to the Italian chefs that power up DC's dining scene.

**C** Catch *Venice: Canaletto and His Rivals* in its exclusive US engagement at the **National Gallery of Art** (Feb. 20-May 30). Savor Italian cuisine at the Gallery's Garden Café, featuring recipes from award-winning Chef Fabio Trabocchi.

**D** Explore how Italian art, culture and landscapes inspired a contemporary painter and printmaker as *Philip Guston: Roma* makes its only stop in the US at **The Phillips Collection** (Feb. 12-May 15).

**E** Hum along to inspiring arias with Donizetti's "**Don Pasquale**" (May 13-27), directed by Placido Domingo, or take in a classic tale of intrigue with the Shakespeare Theatre Company's "**The Merchant of Venice**" (June 24-July 11).

**F** Delight in art like Leonardo da Vinci's "*Ginevra de' Benci*," his only work displayed in North America (at the **National Gallery of Art**), and architecture like the **Washington National Cathedral**, adorned by the works of Italian stone carvers.

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# Bringing Italian Cinema to American Audiences

***NIAF Grants Have Helped the Italian Film Festival USA Show Critically Acclaimed Italian Films in 10 Cities and to Thousands of Viewers***

By Don Oldenburg

After returning from working two years abroad in Milan, Barbara Klein was disappointed by the lack of recent Italian films shown in her hometown of St. Louis. So, in 2005, she organized the first Italian Film Festival of St. Louis on the campus of Washington University.

The festival featured just three films—Marco Tullio Giordana’s “La Meglio Gioventù” (“The Best of Youth”), Piero Senna’s “La Destinazione” (“The Destination”) and Pupi Avati’s “Il Cuore Altrove” (“The Heart is Elsewhere”). But it was a surprising success, attracting about 1,000 people.

“A lot of other St. Louisans apparently wanted to see contemporary Italian films,” says Klein.

The following year, Klein and friends established the Italian Film Festival of St. Louis as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization—a status that enabled them to seek donations and grants to cover film rental and shipping expenses.

In 2007, a \$2,000 NIAF cultural grant helped the festival expand to Kansas City and Milwaukee. In 2008, another NIAF grant for \$2,500 enabled Klein and her growing group of volunteers bring the festival to Detroit and Cleveland. As festival treasurer Marcia Lang says, “without these grants, we would not have been able to take the festival to other cities.”

The festival added Minneapolis and Chicago in 2009, Denver and Boulder in 2010. The 2011 festival this spring will welcome Memphis, raising the total to 10 cities. “It’s a lot of work to find these films, screen them, get permission to show them...and find the volunteers willing to do the footwork,” says



Courtesy of Medusa Film

Klein. “But we thought, gee, it wouldn’t be so much more to get it started in other cities.”

Each year, Klein and other festival officials come up with a short list of 10 to 12 recent Italian films. They ask organizers in each city to choose four to eight of the films for their festivals. Each festival is organized entirely by volunteers in each of the cities and is funded through donations and sponsorships, such as the NIAF grants.

The objective is to provide the public an opportunity to see quality films from Italy, says Klein, who hopes that showing those films will also elevate awareness and educate the public about Italy—its land, people, culture and language.

Among the films included in the 2011 festival line-up are “Mediterraneo” director Gabriele Salvatores’ 2010 film “Happy Family,” and Rocco Papaleo’s “Basilicata Coast to Coast,” in which a music group and journalist hike across the southern region of Basilicata. “We select movies that are not only critically acclaimed but also shot in different regions of Italy,” says Klein, mentioning one of last year’s hits, the Sicilian-based “Baaria,” by Giuseppe Tornatore, “so that the public becomes familiar with all regions of Italy.”

And while the primary goal remains introducing Italian cinema to the American heartland, the films provide other learning opportunities. Except for Chicago, the festival is held on college campuses. “Being associated with colleges is important. There are professors who introduce the films and speak about historical events or cultural differences depicted, which helps the public better understand



Courtesy of Eagle Pictures and Paco Cinematografica



Courtesy of Rizzoli Films



Courtesy of RAI Trade

and appreciate the film," says Italian Film Festival USA vice president Laura DePetris.

In past festivals, professors have explained the origins of the Northern Italian Occitane dialect as heard in Giorgio Diritti's 2005 film "Il Vento Fa Il Suo Giro" ("The Wind Blows Around"), and the political climate of the '60s and '70s as seen in Daniele Luchetti's 2007 film "Mio Fratello è Figlio Unico" ("My Brother Is an Only Child"). "It's like a five minute talk to bring audiences up to speed," says Klein.

The festival is free to the public. It attracts audiences experiencing Italian film for the first time, cinephiles, Italian Americans desiring to learn more about their roots, and immigrants and Italian nationals living in the United States. "There are a lot of Italian Americans who want to see images of their

ancestral homeland," says Klein, whose counts among her favorite films Giulio Manfredonia's "Si Può Fare" ("We Can Do That"), voted by last year's festival audiences as the best film.

The 2010 festival attracted over 8,100 spectators. Organizers are hoping that news of the festival will spread so that even more people will enjoy the upcoming films. "The grants NIAF awarded to the Italian Film Festival of St. Louis in 2007 and 2008 are still paying dividends," says Klein.

*Buona visione! ▲*

**Visit the 2011 Italian Film Festival USA, mid-March to mid-May, in St. Louis, Kansas City, Milwaukee, Detroit, Cleveland, Minneapolis, Chicago, Boulder, Denver and Memphis. See [www.italianfilmfests.org](http://www.italianfilmfests.org) for more information.**

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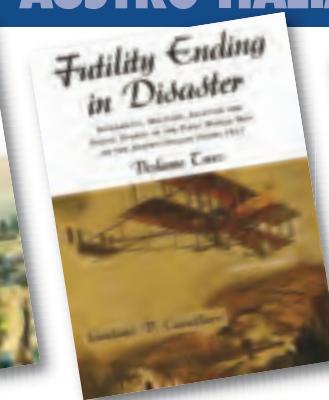
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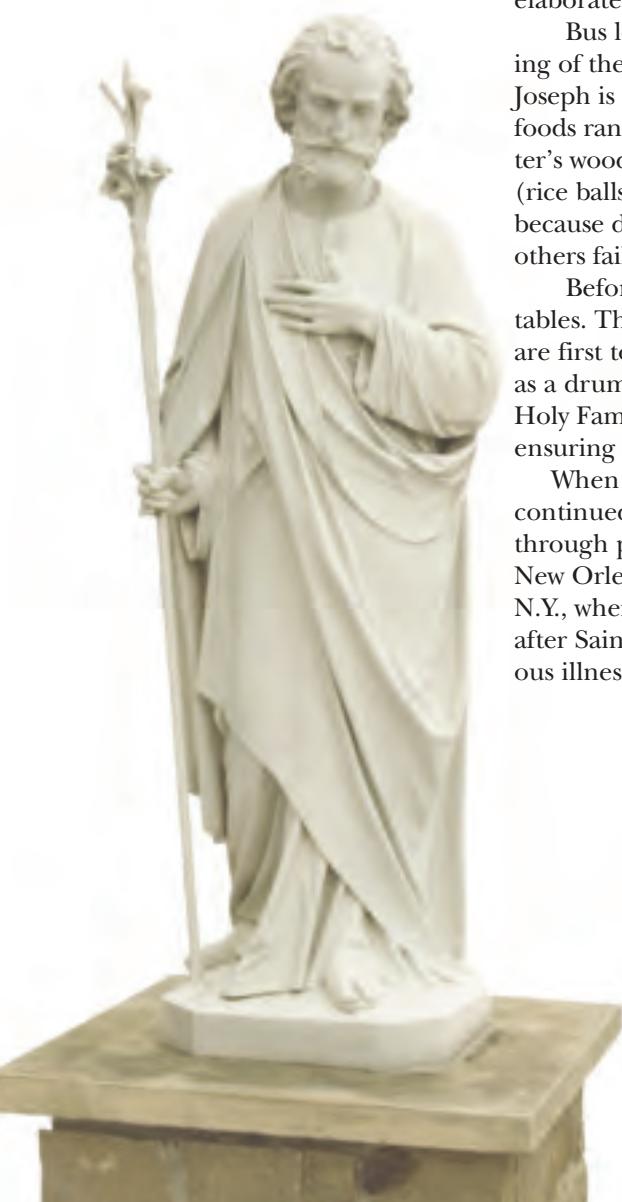
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# Tables Set For A Saint

By Mary Ann Esposito



Mary Ann Esposito is the host and creator of the PBS series "Ciao Italia," the longest running cooking show in America. She is also the author of 11 books on Italian cooking, including "Ciao Italia Five Ingredient Favorites."



March 19 is no ordinary day in Sicily. On this traditional feast day of Saint Joseph, Father of the Holy Family, patron of carpenters and pastry chefs, and protector of the poor and the dying, towns and villages prepare what is known as *le tavole di San Giuseppe* (the tables of Saint Joseph). It's a gastronomic display of more than 100 dishes in his honor.

Why all the fuss? Saint Joseph is credited with delivering Sicily from famine during the Middle Ages. In gratitude, families of farmers and fishermen built altars in their homes and opened their doors to friends and strangers to share what they had.

Salemi, a small town in Sicily's Belice Valley, celebrates in a big way. Weeks before the feast, the women of the town begin food preparations. The feast day usually occurs during Lent, so only meatless dishes are permitted.

Bread is the most important component. One specialty is a type of sourdough left to rise for hours before being sculpted into intricate designs of Saint Joseph's beard, sandals, carpenter tools and staff. Letters of the alphabet, stars, birds, flowers and crosses are carved from the dough using implements like pasta wheels, hair combs, sewing needles and thimbles. The entire town is covered in these bread ornaments, along with oranges and lemons. Foliage decorates elaborate outdoor altars, lamp posts, doorways and shop windows.

Bus loads of worshippers arrive on the day to partake in the blessing of the tables and to view altars set up in private homes where Saint Joseph is the guest of honor. And, in front of him, groaning boards of foods ranging from pasta with bread crumbs (symbolizing a carpenter's wood shavings) to fava beans, fried cardoons, fish dishes, arancini (rice balls), and filled cream puffs (bigne). Fava beans are significant because during Sicily's most severe famine, this crop thrived while others failed, which is why it is often referred to as a lucky bean.

Before anyone can eat, the clergy offer prayers and bless the tables. Then, the Holy Family (*virgineddi*), represented by children, are first to eat. They must taste each dish, pausing between each one as a drumbeat sounds and the crowd roars "viva San Giuseppe." The Holy Family cuts into a large loaf of bread and hands out pieces, ensuring good luck in the coming year to all who eat it.

When waves of Sicilian immigrants arrived in America, many continued the tradition of *le tavole* in gratitude for favors received through prayers to Saint Joseph. The tradition is especially strong in New Orleans where many Sicilian immigrants settled, and in Buffalo, N.Y., where my maternal grandmother prepared elaborate dishes after Saint Joseph granted her wish to cure my grandfather of a serious illness. Viva San Giuseppe! ▶

## Fennel and Orange Salad (Insalata di Finocchio e Arancia)

Serves 4 to 6

This Sicilian salad is colorful and uses the local ingredients, such as blood oranges and wild fennel. It is especially refreshing after a fish meal and you always find this salad among the dishes served for the feast of St. Joseph.

### Ingredients:

- 6 medium blood or navel oranges
- 1 medium bulb fennel, trimmed and cut into thin strips
- 2 tablespoons finely minced fennel leaves
- 3 tablespoons finely chopped walnuts
- ½ cup Extra-Virgin Olive Oil
- Salt and freshly cracked black pepper to taste
- Romaine lettuce leaves



Courtesy of Shutterstock

### Directions:

Peel the oranges and remove as much of the pith (white membrane) as possible. Slice the oranges into thin rounds and place them in a shallow dish, slightly overlapping them.

Sprinkle the fennel strips, fennel leaves and walnuts over the orange slices. Drizzle the olive oil over, and sprinkle with salt and cracked pepper.

Cover tightly with plastic wrap and let the salad stand at room temperature for several hours. Every so often, tilt and turn the dish so that the oil and juices that have collected flow over and around the oranges.

To serve, arrange the salad on a bed of Romaine lettuce and pour the juices over.

## Swordfish with Red Onions (Pescespada Con Cipolle Rosse)

Serves 4

Fish, especially tuna and swordfish, make up a good part of the Sicilian diet. Walk through the Vuccuria market and you will see a dizzying display of the local catch. All fish are simply prepared with minimum number of ingredients to allow the fresh flavors to really shine. Here we use the *agrodolce* (sweet and sour) technique of using vinegar to caramelize and bring out the natural sugars of the onions to compliment the swordfish.

### Ingredients:

- ¼ cup plus 1 ½ tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 2 pounds swordfish, cut into 4 pieces and patted dry
- 4 medium red onions, thinly sliced
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar

### Directions:

Early in the day, marinate the fish: Pour 2 ½ tablespoons of the oil into a glass dish large enough to hold the fish in one layer. Add the fish, turning to coat. Cover and refrigerate until ready to grill.

Preheat a charcoal or gas grill. In a skillet, heat the remaining 3 tablespoons oil. Add the onions and cook over low heat, stirring occasionally, until they have dark-

ened and are caramelized, about 20 minutes. Raise the heat to high, stir in the vinegar, and let the vinegar evaporate. Reduce the heat to low and keep warm.

Grill the fish for about 4 minutes on each side, basting with the marinade just until a knife is easily inserted. Remove the fish to a serving dish. Place the onions on top and serve immediately. *This recipe is from "Celebrations Italian Style" by Mary Ann Esposito, published by William Morrow and Company Inc., in 1995.*



Courtesy of Shutterstock

**Cream Puffs***(Pasta Per Bigne)*

Makes 8 large or 16 small

Bigne are cream puffs and go by other names, including zeppole and sfinge. Popular for the feast of St. Joseph, they require simple ingredients. The goal is dry cream puffs. The trick is to use more egg whites, which have drying properties, in place of whole eggs, which can leave cream puffs' interior wet.



Courtesy of Shutterstock

**Main Ingredients:**

- 1 cup water
- ½ cup sweet butter cut into bits
- 1 tablespoon superfine sugar
- Pinch salt
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup bread flour
- 2 or 3 large eggs
- 2 large egg whites

**Directions:**

Preheat the oven to 450° F

Butter and flour two baking sheets, or line the sheets with parchment paper, and set aside.

Pour the water into a 1-quart saucepan and add the butter, sugar and salt and bring to a rolling boil. Add the vanilla. Remove pan from the heat and stir in the flour all at once and mix until it forms a ball.

Return the pot to the stove and over medium heat, "dry" the paste by stirring it in one direction to remove as much water from the paste as possible. This will allow the eggs to be absorbed better and produce a light puff.

When the paste is really dry looking, remove it from the heat. Allow it to cool for a few minutes, then transfer the paste to a food processor fitted with a steel blade. Beat the paste for a few minutes until it is warm, not hot, otherwise it may cook the eggs.

Through the feed tube, add 1 egg and process the mixture until it is well blended. Add the second egg and process again. Add 1 egg white and process, then the second egg white. Don't add the third egg if the mixture doesn't hold up in a mass when scooped. You may not need the third egg. To do this by hand, use a wooden spoon to add the eggs and whites as explained above.

The paste should look shiny and should be smooth and thick and be able to fall from the spoon in a heavy mass.

Spoon the paste into a pastry bag with or without a plain tip. Only fill the bag ¾ full or the paste will ooze out the top. Twist the bag and pipe out 1 ½ inch rounds onto the baking sheets. For miniature puffs, pipe ¼ inch rounds. (Two spoons can be used instead of a pastry bag.) Smooth the tops of each puff by dipping your finger in water and rounding the tops.

Bake on the middle rack for 12-15 minutes or until they are puffed and beginning to brown. Lower the heat to 300° F and continue baking for 20 to 30 minutes or until the puffs are golden brown and dry. Do not remove them

until they are browned and dry otherwise they will collapse. I leave the puffs in the oven after shutting it off with the door ajar.

Make a small slit in each puff to allow steam to escape. Cool on cooling racks to allow for good air circulation. Puffs can be wrapped individually and frozen for up to one month.

**Pastry Cream Ingredients:**

- 3 cups milk
- ¾ cup sugar
- 3 tablespoons flour
- 3 tablespoons cornstarch or potato starch
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1 teaspoon almond extract
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 cup whipping cream, whipped

**Directions:**

Heat the milk to just under the boil in a 2-quart saucepan. Combine the sugar, flour, cornstarch and salt in a bowl and stir into the milk. Stir in the eggs and whisk until the mixture thickens. Remove from the heat and stir in the almond extract and butter. Transfer the mixture to a bowl, cover and chill.

When ready to serve, beat the cream in a separate bowl and fold into the pastry cream until smooth. Fit a pastry bag with a plain tip and fill the bag ¾ full with the pastry cream. Puncture the side of each cream puff with the pastry tip and fill.

Place the cream puffs on a footed serving dish, sprinkle with confectioner's sugar and serve immediately. ▲

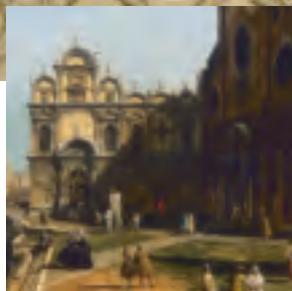
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**THE NATION'S CAPITOL  
IS CELEBRATING ITALY'S  
150TH ANNIVERSARY**

**WITH AN ACCENT ON**

**ALL THINGS ITALIAN**

The Nation's Capital is brushing up on its Italian this spring with a citywide festival of exhibitions, theater performances and activities observing the 150th anniversary of the Unification of Italy. From March 1 through May 30, Washington, D.C., will be celebrating its Italian connection for two full months, promoting all things Italianesque, from arts and architecture to culture and cuisine.

So pack your English-to-Italian dictionary (if you need it), head to D.C., and get ready to shout, "Bravissimo!" Though, try to keep it down in the museums, *per favore* ►



The Moran gondola on view in front of a photo mural detail of Michele Marieschi's "The Bacino di San Marco," at the entrance to the exhibition "Venice: Canaletto and His Rivals"



Bernardo Bellotto's "The Campo Santi Giovanni e Paolo," painted about 1745

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Widener Collection



Leonardo da Vinci, *Ginevra de' Benci* (detail), c. 1474 / 1478, oil on panel, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund

The centerpiece of La Dolce DC's festivities is the National Gallery of Art's exclusive North American showing of "Venice: Canaletto and His Rivals," open through May 30.

Featuring 21 of Canaletto's finest 18th-century cityscapes, the exhibition focuses on his rivalries with other "view painters" of the time. Alongside Canaletto's grand and detailed scenes of Venetian canals, piazzas and streets are 33 paintings by talented but lesser-known artists such as Gaspar Vanvitelli, Luca Carlevarijs, Michele Marieschi, Bernardo Bellotto and Francesco Guardi.

As a side dish, the National Gallery offers a tempting menu of related activities, ranging from concerts featuring the compositions of Vivaldi to gallery talks. Most afternoons, you can catch the documentary film that takes a look at the tourist passion for Venice. There's a five-part lecture

series exploring Venice's urban environment. And you can't miss the rare 19th-century gondola that American artist Thomas Moran brought back to his Long Island home from an 1890 trip to Venice. Not a painting. It's right there! You'll be booking your Venice flights before you're out of the Gallery.

But which came first, the Italian exhibitions or the Italian festival? "Some of the cornerstone art exhibitions and performances have been in the works for years,"

says Victoria Isley, Senior Vice President of Destination DC, the lead organization marketing Washington, D.C., as a premier convention and tourism destination. DC Destination is partnering with the National Italian American Foundation and the Embassy of Italy in presenting the festival.

While you're at the National Gallery, make sure to spend time with one of its greatest prizes, Leonardo da Vinci's magnificent painting "Ginevra de' Benci," circa 1474-1478—the only work of Leonardo's on view in the Western Hemisphere.

"La Dolce DC was created to show off the international arts and cultural connections in the nation's capital, specifically the passionate art and design influences of Italy," adds Isley.

The National Gallery's other Italian-inspired exhibition is "Italian Master Drawings from the Wolfgang Ratjen Collection: 1525-1835," May 15 through Nov. 27. It will feature 65 master drawings from the late Renaissance to the neoclassical movement, from such artists as Giulio Romano and Giovanni Domenico Tiepolo to Domenico Tintoretto and Giovanni Battista Piranesi.

Meanwhile, a ground-breaking exhibition that casts an entirely different light on the essence of Italia is on display at The Phillips Collection through May 15. "Philip Guston, Roma" features

39 abstract expressionist paintings of Philip Guston, works from this Italy-lover's tenure as artist-in-residence at the American Academy in Rome in the early 1970s. Expect to be challenged by Guston's innovative style of modern narrative painting—especially if your artistic comfort zone is Canaletto.

"Guston's Roma series, painted during his third and final sojourn in Italy . . . testifies to the artist's lifelong interest in and respect for Italian art, landscape and culture," says Peter Benson Miller, the Rome-based curator of the exclusive exhibition of paintings never before displayed together. "He was fascinated with many aspects of Italy, from its antique monuments and formal gardens to the films of Federico Fellini."

One thing about Washington that Fellini would've appreciated is that there are Italian influences everywhere you look (think "La Dolce Vita," not so much "Satyricon"). Even where you get stuck in traffic, like crossing Memorial Bridge where you'll see four bold equestrian statues cast in bronze and surfaced in pure gold by Italian artisans in 1951.

"America's capital is infused with the influences of a culture that laid the foundations of Western society," wrote Italian professor of architecture Luca Molinari in the book, "The Italian Legacy in Washington D.C.: Architecture, Design, Art, and Culture."



Philip Guston.  
Rome Garden,  
1971. Oil on paper  
mounted on panel.  
Private Collection,  
Woodstock, NY.

Canaletto's  
"San Cristoforo,  
San Michele and  
Murano from the  
Fondamenta Nuove,"  
painted about 1722

© Estate of Philip Guston; image courtesy McKee Gallery, New York, NY



Scott Suchman for WNO

If you're standing in line for the tour inside the U.S. Capitol, for instance, just look up, as if you're in the plot of Dan Brown's novel "The Lost Symbol." What you'll see is the incredible dome of the Capitol's rotunda displaying the grandeur of "The Apotheosis of George Washington" by Italian master Constantino Brumidi. The Capitol's exterior further speaks to the influence in its 19th century neoclassical columns inspired by buildings like the Pantheon of ancient Rome, translated to America through the ideas of Italian Renaissance architect Andrea Palladio.

By the way, you can even find a bust of Italian patriot Giuseppe Garibaldi, hero of Italian unification, near the entryway to the Old Supreme Court chamber in the north wing of the Capitol.

There's more: Check out the work of Italian craftsmen at the Watergate complex, designed by Rome-based architect Luigi Moretti, the iconic Lincoln statue in the Lincoln Memorial carved by the Tuscany-born Piccirilli brothers, and the Roman classicism of the Jefferson Memorial.

In Georgetown, stroll through the Italian-inspired terrace gardens of Dumbarton Oaks or head up Wisconsin Avenue to the National Cathedral where first-generation Italian-American stone carvers created much of the exterior sculpting. For a spiritual pause, there's also the Holy Rosary

Church, which celebrates Mass in Italian, 10:30 a.m., Sundays.

If theater is your cup of cappuccino, La Dolce DC says "benvenuti." You won't want to miss the Washington National Opera's performance "Madama Butterfly." Presented by WNO's legendary General Director Plácido Domingo and Music Director Philippe Auguin, Giacomo Puccini's tragic masterpiece is performed in Italian with English sub-titles and plays through March 19 at the Kennedy Center Opera House.

From May 13 to May 27, the Washington National Opera will present Gaetano Donizetti's comic opera "Don Pasquale," in Italian with English subtitles, as Plácido Domingo takes to the podium.

Check out The National Geographic Museum's "The Etruscans: An Ancient Culture Revealed," which looks at the culture of the Italian peninsula centuries before the rise of the Roman Republic, June 10 through Sept. 25. For contemporary Italian culture, the Embassy of Italy will host an Italian fashion, trade and design show, April 4, at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center.

Another intersection of Italian culture and the Nation's Capital is cuisine. DC's restaurant scene is "getting Italian inspiration this spring" in time for La Dolce DC, says Isley. "Noted chef Fabio Trabocchi returns to Washington,



Copyright Dallas Museum of Art, Texas

Puccini's  
"Madama Butterfly,"  
performed by  
the Washington  
National Opera



D.C., to open his own restaurant, Fiola, in Penn Quarter. He will also be chef in residence at the National Gallery's Garden Café Italia" in honor of the National Gallery's two Italian exhibitions, serving signature Italian dishes. Celebrity chef Roberto Donna came back to D.C. just last year to open Galileo II near the White House. And, TV's 'Top Chef' all-star Mike Isabella "is set to open Graffiato across from the Verizon Center downtown in concert with La Dolce DC," adds Isley.

While Italian culinary arts are in abundance, some restaurants are serving La Dolce DC specials. If in the first week of May, for instance, you're on Wisconsin Avenue and smell the aroma of spiced porcini crusted bisteca or cherry lacquered duck breast, that's Paolo's Ristorante's \$42 "La Dolce Vita Prix Fixed Menu." And The Fairmont Washington D.C. Hotel, in West End, is saluting the festival with its Roman Holiday Package—an overnight stay for two, a three-course Italian dinner for two in its restaurant, Juniper, two tickets to The Phillips Collection, and a DVD of the film "Roman Holiday" starring Audrey Hepburn and Gregory Peck.

For a complete listing of La Dolce DC activities and events, visit [ladolcedc.org](http://ladolcedc.org). "We invite visitors from around the country and around the world to celebrate Italy right here in D.C.," says Isley. ▲



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Detail from "Expedition of the Thousand," Giuseppe Garibaldi at the Battle of Calatafimi (May 15, 1860), a 19th-century painting by A. Remy-Legat. At the Museo del Risorgimento, Milan.

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## History of

# Italian Unity<sup>made easier</sup>

If You Think the History of the Unification of Italy is Not Complicated,  
You're Not Italian. Italians Know It's *Molto Complicata*

By Roberto Severino

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the unification of Italy. A momentous accomplishment, it is celebrated every March 17, the day in 1861 when Victor Emmanuel II of the House of Savoy and King of Sardinia was proclaimed the first King of Italy.

But as simple as that crowning moment may sound, not much leading up to the historic day that would shape the modern nation of Italy proves to be *semplice*.

In continental Europe, many states had been politically strong, unified and centralized for centuries, whereas, despite its long established national cultural ideology, Italy achieved comparable political status only much later.

The multi-faceted process that led to Italy's political unification is known as "*il Risorgimento*." A complex resurgence of often contrasting political ideas and ideals that were first launched at the end of the 18th century, then reinvigorated in the 19th century, *il Risorgimento* underlay a nationalist struggle directed mainly against one particular enemy—Habsburg Austria, which then ruled in Lombardy and the Veneto region and, indirectly, also in much of the rest of the peninsula.

Many forces and personalities shaped *il Risorgimento*. Men such as Vincenzo Gioberti (1801-1852), an influential priest, writer and politician, endeavored to create a confederation of all the seven extant Italian states (the Kingdom of Sardinia, the Lombardo Veneto Kingdom, the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, the Duchy of Modena, the Duchy of Parma, the Papal States, and the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies) under the spiritual and political guidance of Pope Pius IX.

Others, like Giuseppe Garibaldi (1807-1882) and Giuseppe Mazzini (1805-1872), both of whom espoused more radical political programs, wanted to do away with all forms of monarchy, including that of the Pope. In their place, they wanted to establish egalitarian, secular forms of republican government. And still others aspired to a constitutional form of a national monarchy under the House of Savoy. This, with the able maneuvering of Piedmont-Sardinia's Camillo Benso, Count of Cavour (1810-1861), was the form of government that would ultimately prevail.

Although often strongly disagreeing with each other on how best to achieve the goal of the political unification of Italy, Garibaldi (the heroic, ideal-►

istic soldier), Mazzini (the lucid theorist and unrelenting organizer) and Cavour (the astute politician and statesman) later were recognized as the triad that most effectively brought to fruition the centuries-old dream. They created a unified nation that would finally take its rightful place among the modern nations.

Giuseppe Garibaldi was the inspirational leader of the drive towards Italy's unification. He had come to be known as the "Hero of the Two Worlds" because, in the 1830s and 1840s, before fighting for Italy, he had fought countless battles in South America, contributing with his "Red Shirts" to the independence of Uruguay. These volunteers owed their name to the fact that they went into battle wearing red shirts used by butchers so blood could not be easily detected.

In 1860, with the legendary "*I Mille*," his 1,000-man military expedition to Sicily, Garibaldi went on to conquer the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, the largest and most populated of the 19th-century Italian states. Remarkably, he then met with Victor Emmanuel, the Piedmontese king, in Campania, near Teano, and simply handed over to him the newly conquered territories.

Although a staunch republican, Garibaldi understood that for Italy a republican solution was unthinkable, or at best premature, due to opposition of the powerful French and Austrian monarchs and their steadfast support for the Papal temporal rule. Garibaldi was further disillusioned by the king's (and Cavour's) unwillingness to admit his volunteers into the regular Piedmontese army, or to officially acknowledge them for their great accomplishment.



Map of the Unification of Italy, 1815-1870

He immediately left for a self-imposed exile on the island of Caprera off the coast of Sardinia.

Interestingly, about a decade before these momentous events, Garibaldi spent a few years of exile in the United States, at Staten Island, N.Y. He became a naturalized citizen while staying there, working with the Italian scientist and entrepreneur Antonio Meucci, a friend and political supporter now considered by many to be the true inventor of the telephone.

In New York, the memory of Garibaldi's sojourn never faded. The Garibaldi Guard of the 39th New York State Volunteers—named in his honor—fought throughout the Civil War with great distinction.

Lately, the connection between Garibaldi and America has become even more intriguing, though controversial. A few years ago, a historian unearthed in an archive in Turin a postcard sent by Garibaldi to King Victor Emmanuel II that appears to confirm that, at the beginning of the Civil War, President Lincoln offered Garibaldi the command of the Northern Union Army.

As for Mazzini, after expounding his ideas widely and joining the secret republican society of the Carboneria, the austere patriot and republican philosopher was imprisoned and risked his life many times for his political activities. He eventually left Piedmont for Marseille, France, to found the movement of "*Giovine Italia*" (Young Italy) whose political goal was that of an Italy "*una, indipendente, libera, repubblicana*" (united, independent, free, and republican).

Twice condemned to death in absentia by Piedmontese courts, Mazzini spent most of his life abroad. Occasionally, he returned to Italy to participate in daring revolutionary deeds such as the creation of the Roman Republic (Feb. 9—July 4, 1849) that he



Giuseppe Garibaldi, 1861, in Naples, Italy.

briefly led as a member of the triumvirate.

But Piedmontese's enmity was enduring. In 1860, just as Mazzini was planning to join Garibaldi, who was successfully campaigning against the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, the Kingdom of Sardinia excluded him from a general amnesty. Not until 1870 would Mazzini so benefit, along with other political prisoners, for the celebration of the conquest of Rome.

Camillo Benso, Count of Cavour, was a moderate political realist and one of the 19th century's most consummate masters of diplomacy. When appointed first minister of the Kingdom of Sardinia, he used his skills to first consolidate that state and then, through alliances and short wars of independence, to promote its territorial expansion. By 1861, the year in which Cavour died just three months after Victor Emmanuel II was proclaimed first king of Italy, the former Kingdom of Sardinia would encompass most of present-day Italy, with the exception of Veneto and of the Papal States.

Cavour understood that by contributing a Piedmontese contingent to the Crimean War (1853-1856)—fought by a coalition of Great Britain, France, Piedmont-Sardinia and the Duchy of Nassau against Russia over influence in the Ottoman Empire—he would ensure himself a place at the victors' table. This gave him the opportunity of putting on that table what had come to be known as the "Italian Question," enabling him to skillfully play France against England, the two superpowers of the time, to

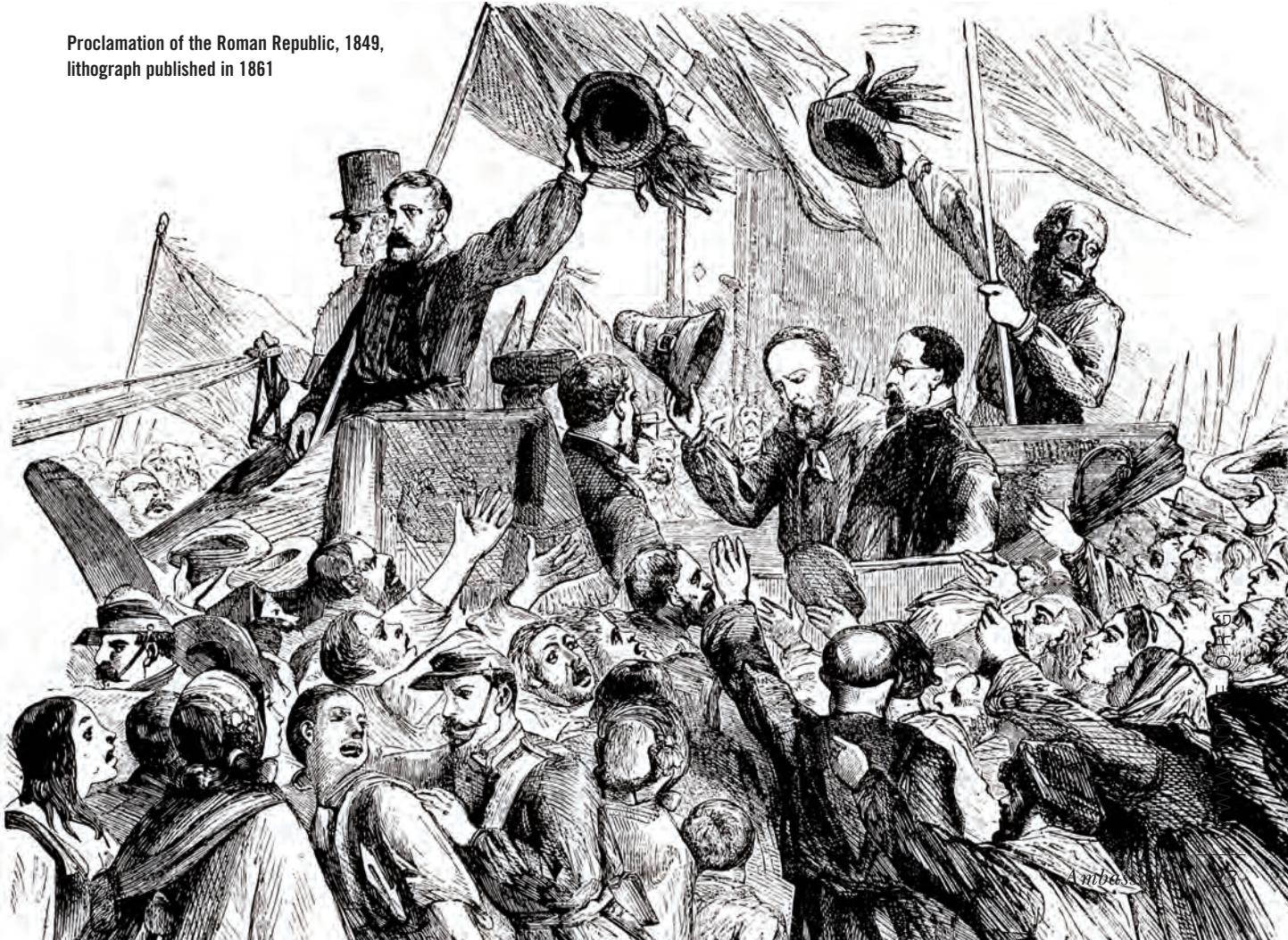
counter Austria's interests in the Italian peninsula.

To secure French military support against Austria for the annexation to Piedmont-Sardinia of Tuscany and Romagne, Cavour did not hesitate to swap Garibaldi's hometown of Nice and the province of Savoy to France, much to the dismay of Garibaldi and Mazzini. To further secure Napoleon III's goodwill toward the Italian cause, he sent to France an envoy whose beautiful wife, the Countess of Castiglione, Cavour's own cousin, he entrusted with the task of seducing the French emperor.

Cavour's doctors attributed his sudden death in 1861 to a severe bout of malaria that he had contracted years before in the rice fields of his native Piedmont. However, soon after his demise, certain accusations were made that recently surfaced evidence seems to corroborate. The evidence suggests a female French agent under orders of Napoleon III may have poisoned Cavour because he had not honored a secret treaty that would have ceded Sardinia and Liguria to France in exchange for Piedmont's annexation of the Papal regions of Marche and Umbria, and of the Two Sicilies.

By 1861, a Kingdom of Italy that spun out of a much "enlarged" Kingdom of Sardinia, with Victor Emmanuel II at its helm, had become a reality. Victor Emmanuel, despite being the sovereign of a new and more important political entity run by a constitutional, parliamentary government, insisted on keeping the "II" after his name. That led many skeptics to surmise that the new unified geopolitical entity had been the result of an expansionistic ➤

Proclamation of the Roman Republic, 1849,  
lithograph published in 1861





A mid-19th century photograph of Giuseppe Mazzini by Domenico Lama, an Italian patriot and pioneering photographer

design rather than a democratic process.

This new state did not yet include all of Italy. The Papal States and the Pope's temporal rule were defended by a strong French military contingent. Veneto was protected by Austrian troops. However, soon the fluid European situation presented Italy with the occasion to acquire them both. In 1866, rather than stay neutral, Italy intervened on the side of Prussia in a short-lasting war against Austria (known in Italy as the Third War of Independence) and was rewarded with the annexation of Venice and Veneto.

In 1870, the specter of defeat in the Franco-Prussian war forced France to recall all its troops stationed in Rome, allowing the Italian army to take over the remaining Papal territories and occupy Rome on September 20. In October of that year, the Romans voted to join the new state that now

***“They created a unified nation that would finally take its rightful place among the modern nations.”***

numbered some 25 million inhabitants. And, in July 1871, the city became the capital of a unified Italy.

But events leading to a unified Italy had occurred in rapid succession. In just 10 years, from 1861 and 1871, three different Italian cities had been the capital of Italy: Turin (1861-65), Florence (1865-1871) and Rome (since July 8, 1871). And the key achievement of Italian unity was accomplished in only two years (1859-1861).

Although exhilarating, it left many social and economic questions unsolved. Still to be dealt with were important issues such as literacy, the right to

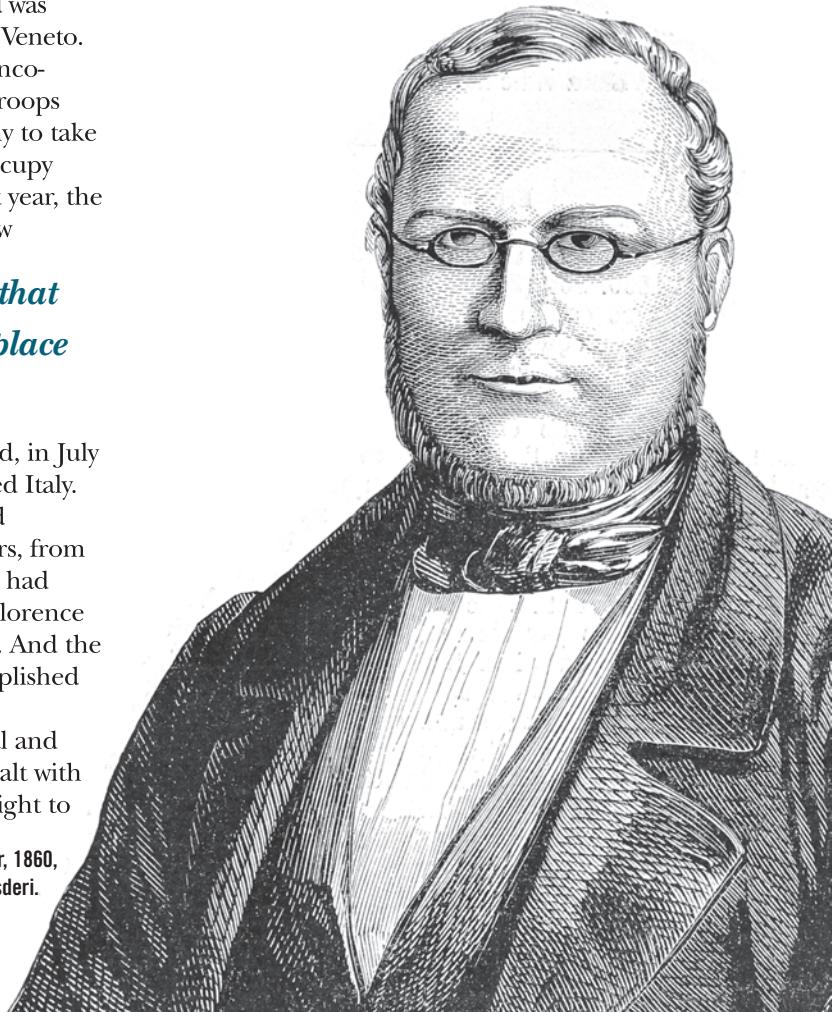
universal suffrage, a truly representative government, the issue of local autonomy, the pronounced discrepancy in the standards of living of its citizens, and the enormous economic difference between the industrialized North and the largely agrarian South. The latter, especially, led to many episodes of social unrest and, in the intervening years, prompted a painful mass migratory movement towards far-away countries and, later, internally, from the South of Italy to the North.

As for the political shape and extension of Italy, it finally would be completed only after the conclusion of WWI (1914-1918) with the addition of Alto Adige, Trentino and Trieste.

Yet, as important as all of these people, events and often controversial issues may have been, the consciousness of a common national and cultural soul that shaped the new nation went well beyond the contingent and, at the time, compelling urgency of any of the single elements that contributed to the *Risorgimento*.

Like a mighty river growing and swelling over the years out of countless drops of rain, feeding thousands of rivulets, the *Risorgimento* ultimately coincided with a common dream whose sources lie deep in the mountains and in the past. Even today, it represents the most enduring, fundamental factor on which the national identity of the new Italy has been built. ▲

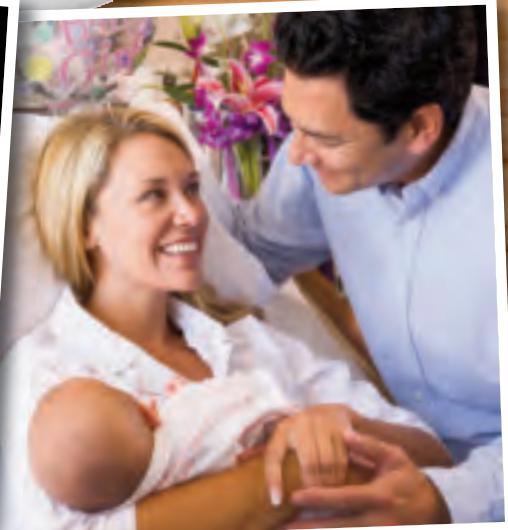
*Roberto Severino, a native of Catania, Italy, is a well-known educator. He has written extensively on many literary and historical subjects and is a Professor Emeritus of Italian, Georgetown University.*



Engraving of Camillo Benso, Count of Cavour, 1860, by Adolphe Eugène Disdéri.

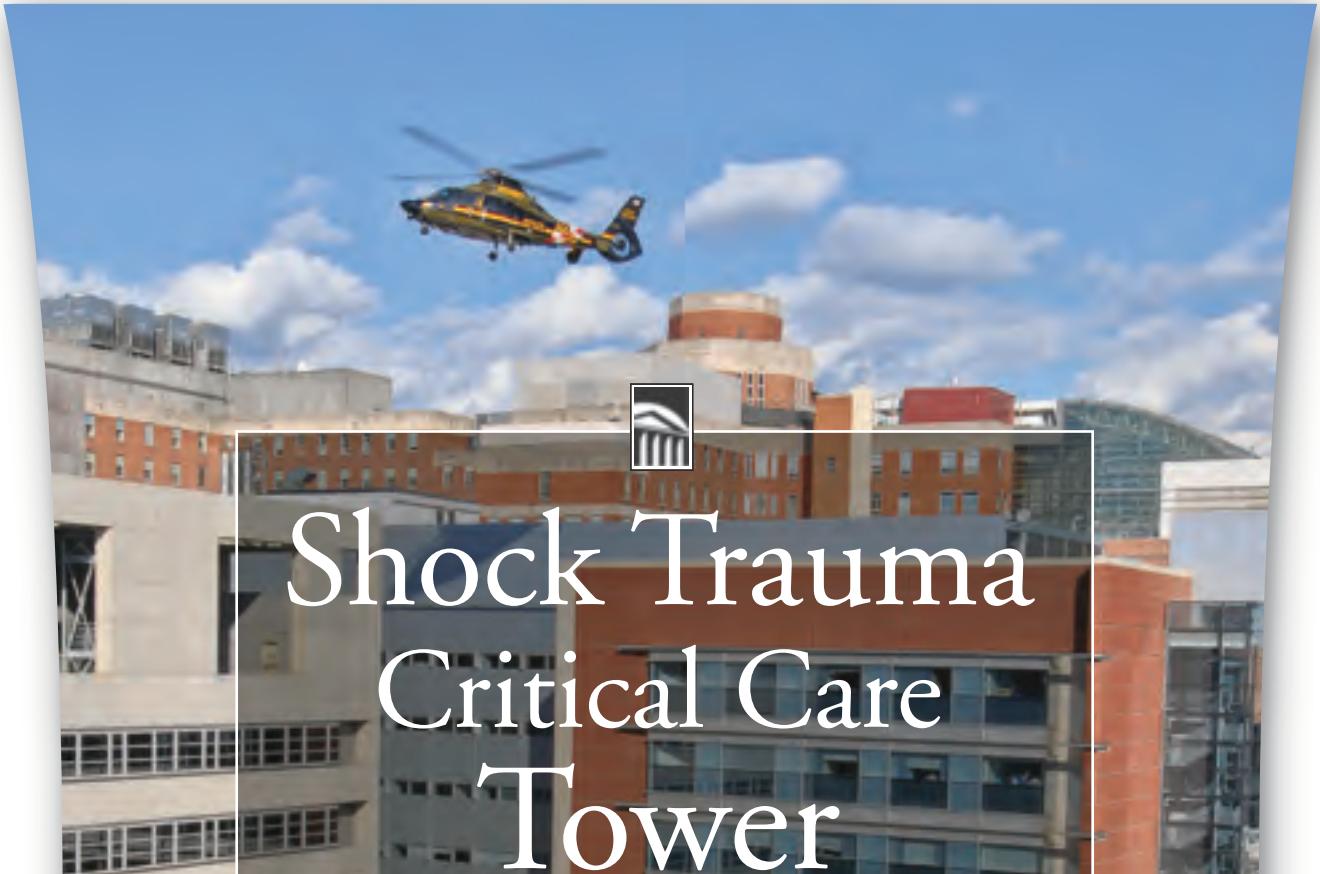
# Make sure your children and grandchildren receive all of their inheritance.

- You may worry about passing down family photographs, your mother's silver or your father's pocket watch. But your family's Italian American heritage is just as important.
- By giving your children and grandchildren the gift of membership to the National Italian American Foundation, you'll ensure that they'll inherit their true birthright – a proud history, opportunities to study the language of their ancestors and a connection to others who share their heritage.
- Contact NIAF today at [www.niaf.org](http://www.niaf.org) and click "Support NIAF" or call 202-387-0600 and ask for "Membership" to find out how you can share your ancestry today.





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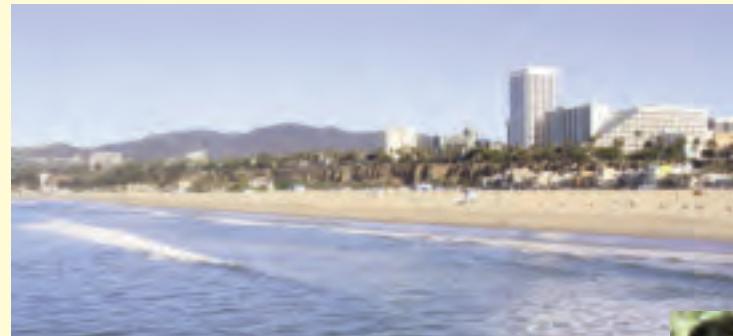
*we heal >>>> we teach >>>> we discover >>>> we care*

## Santa Monica, Here NIAF Comes!

If you haven't registered yet for the National Italian American Foundation's West Coast Gala, what are you waiting for? The star-studded evening takes place in the beautiful California resort town of Santa Monica, May 19, 2011, at the luxurious Fairmont Miramar Hotel & Bungalows, just a five minute walk to famous Santa Monica Beach.

Film and television star, producer and director **Joe Mantegna** will be this year's master of ceremonies. Actor and singer **Franc D'Ambrosio**, of "Phantom of the Opera" fame, will sing the U.S. and Italian national anthems and entertain.

This year's honorees include Major League Baseball Hall of Famer and Dodgers great **Tommy Lasorda**, who will receive a NIAF Lifetime Achievement Award in Sports Management, California attorney and famed trial lawyer **Thomas V. Girardi**, who will receive a NIAF Special Achievement Award in Law, and sports marketing mastermind **Sonny Vaccaro**, who will receive the Foundation's Special



Achievement Award in Youth Activities and Sports. The gala will also pay tribute to legendary public affairs consultant and former NIAF vice chairman **Joseph R. Cerrell**.

Special Guests will include Academy Award-winning actor **Ernest Borgnine**, 12-time Major League Baseball All-Star catcher **Mike Piazza**, stage, TV and film star **Brenda Vaccaro**, TV ("The Hulk") and film star **Lou Ferrigno**, E! News Anchor and Managing Editor **Giuliana Depandi Rancic**, and Italian-born American actor **Francesco Quinn**, son of **Anthony Quinn**.

Reception starts at 6:30 p.m., dinner at 7:30 p.m. For sponsorship and ticket information for this exciting and memorable evening and to register online, visit [www.niaf.org/westcoastgala](http://www.niaf.org/westcoastgala). Or contact Jerry Jones at 202/939-3102 or [jerry@niaf.org](mailto:jerry@niaf.org).



Giuliana  
Depandi Rancic



Thomas V. Girardi

## Gigi D'Alessio and NIAF Harmonize at Radio City Music Hall

With spotlights shining brightly, popular Italian singer and songwriter **Gigi D'Alessio** lit up Radio City Music Hall, in New York City, Valentines Day, Feb. 14, 2011, receiving one standing ovation after another from the packed audience and making unforgettable music with an A-list of guest celebrities.

During the concert, NIAF Board Member **Michael A. Zampardi**, National Italian American Foundation Regional Vice President for Greater New York, presented D'Alessio with a NIAF United States-Italy Friendship Award. Joining Zampardi for the ceremony and show were members of NIAF's leadership, **Linda R. Carlozzi**, **Robert E. Carlucci**, **Rocco Comisso**, **Arthur J. Furia** and **Salvatore M. Salibello**.

The concert, "Tu vuo' fa' l'Americano" ("You pretend to be American"), was a special tribute to D'Alessio's friend, Maestro Renato Carosone—one of the great figures in the 20th century Italian music. Accompa-

nying D'Alessio at his piano was his band and a 50-piece American orchestra, conducted by **Maurizio Pica**. With a 3D techno light show pulsing, D'Alessio also shared the stage with other acclaimed entertainers, including **Liza Minnelli**, Manhattan Transfer, Italian crooner **Mario Biondi** and Christian de Sica, son of the legendary Italian actor and director **Vittorio de Sica**. Other special guests included former Middleweight Champions, Italian boxing great **Nino Benvenuti** and **Emile Griffith**—the two boxed for the championship in three classic matches in the mid '60s.

A highlight was when D'Alessio sang "It's Now or Never" with legend **Paul Anka** and, for comic relief, he arm-wrestled across his piano with "Rocky" star **Sylvester Stallone**.

GGD Srl, D'Alessio's music management and production company, will produce the show and RAI-TV will broadcast to audiences within the United States and abroad.



Michael A. Zampardi presenting a NIAF United States-Italy Friendship Award to Gigi D'Alessio



Gigi D'Alessio and NIAF Board Member Linda R. Carlozzi



(L to R.) U.S. Rep. Mike Capuano, Rep. Pat Tiberi, Rep. Jim Renacci, Rep. Thomas Marino, NIAF National Executive Director John Marino, Rep. Lou Barletta, NIAF Board Member Robert Carlucci, Rep. John Mica and Rep. Bill Pascrell

## NIAF and Italian American Congressional Delegation Toasts New Members

NIAF hosted a Congressional reception on Feb. 15, 2011, in collaboration with members of the Italian American Congressional Delegation (IACD) of the 112th U.S. Congress to welcome new IACD members. The IACD is a bicameral and bipartisan group of Congressional members of Italian heritage.

Held in the U.S. Capitol, NIAF leadership was joined by the IACD Co-Chairmen **Rep. Pat Tiberi** (OH) and **Rep. Bill Pascrell** (NJ). Among the Members of Congress present

were **Rep. John Mica** (FL), **Rep. Jim Renacci** (OH), **Rep. Michael Grimm** (NY), **Rep. David Cicilline** (RI), **Rep. Thomas Marino** (PA), **Rep. Lou Barletta** (PA). Administration and government officials, Italian Embassy officials, NIAF Council Members, and executives from the DC and Italian American community all raised a glass as Democrat Minority Leader **Rep. Nancy Pelosi** (CA) led the toast, “Viva Italia! God Bless America!”

## Networking in Connecticut

Frigid New England weather didn't stop 40 NIAF friends and supporters from converging on renowned Carmen Anthony Fish House in Wethersfield, Conn., for a Council Reception of wine, appetizers and conversation on Feb. 9, 2011.

Organized by NIAF Connecticut Area Coordinator **Francis M. Donnarumma**, Esq., and hosted by two partners of the Connecticut accounting firm Kostin Ruffkess and Co., **Lawrence Marziale** and **Umberto Santaniello**, the evening was the second of five business networking events planned for Connecticut Council members and guests.

Co-hosting the event were attorneys **Timothy C. Moynahan**, Esq., and **Joseph Tramuta**, Esq., of the Connecticut law firm Moynahan & Minnella. Among those mixing business with pleasure were former Bridgeport mayor **Len Paoletta**, Commissione Giovani-USA president **Maria L. Bello** and **Carmen Anthony Vocalebre**, owner of the Carmen Anthony Restaurant Group. Momentarily quieting the chatter was a performance by Italian lyric soloist **Anna Rita Tornello** with **Robert Fertitta** on piano.



NIAF Area Coordinator Francis M. Donnarumma, Lawrence Marziale, Maria Bello and Joseph Tramuta

## NIAF Media Forum Braves Chicago Blizzard

Neither sleet, snow nor gale winds kept NIAF from hosting journalists and prominent Italian Americans amidst the Windy City's third heaviest snow ever—22.2 inches!

“Celebrating Italia—It's History, Culture and Innovation” was the theme of the Frank J. Guarini/National Italian American Foundation

spoke about the Italian cultural citywide festival in D.C., La Dolce DC, March 1-July 31, 2011.

Since March 17, St. Patrick's Day, marks the official day a united Italy was proclaimed, it was fitting that Allegri hosted the forum at Kitty O' Sheas restaurant at the Hilton Chicago.



Victoria Isley, Senior Vice President of Marketing and Communications for Destination DC, freelance journalist Maureen Jenkins, Robert V. Allegri, NIAF Board Member and Regional Vice President and Vice President of Corporate Communications for the Americas of the Hilton Hotels Corporation, Elissa Ruffino, NIAF Director of Communications, and Lou Vasta, CEO of Vasta and Associates



Freelance journalist Maureen Jenkins and Lou Vasta, CEO of Vasta and Associates, brave the blizzard

(NIAF) eighth media forum at the Chicago Hilton on February 2, 2011. **Robert Allegri**, NIAF Board Member and Regional Vice President and Vice President of Corporate Communications for the Americas of the Hilton Hotels Corporation, hosted the luncheon.

Timed to honor the 150th anniversary of the unification of Italy, **Victoria Isley**, Senior Vice President of Marketing and Communications for Destination DC, Washington, D.C.'s tourism office,

## Lido Civic Club Honors Jane Salzano and Carl Salzano

At its annual Past President's Night Gala, on Jan. 22, 2011, The Lido Civic Club of Washington, D.C., honored **Jane Salzano** and **Carl Salzano** for their pioneering role in improving the care and lives of people with autism.

In 1979, Jane was appalled by the care she witnessed for autistic children while looking for options for her own son, Brian. So she formed the Community Services for Autistic Adults and Children and opened its first residence for autistic individuals in Maryland. Thirty-two years later, through hard work and private donations, she and son Carl have opened 52 independent-living support residences in Maryland. The

Lido Club awarded Jane the "Life Time Achievement Award," and Carl was named "Man of the Year."

On behalf of President Barrack Obama, **Michael Strautmanis**, Special Counsel to President delivered a letter to Jane from the President recognizing the Salzano family's efforts. Among the guests at the black-tie event, held at the Capital Hilton in Washington, D.C., were the **Hon. Patricia de Stacey Harrison**, NIAF Vice Chairwoman and President and CEO for the Corporation of Public Broadcasting, and NIAF Board Member **Robert E. Carlucci**. NIAF is a proud sponsor of The Lido Civic Club's Past President's Night Gala.



Jane Salzano and Carl Salzano at the Lido Civic Club's Past President's Night Gala

## Council Members Honor Meteorologist Sue Pompeani Palka in D.C.

3

Despite bad winter weather, NIAF Council Members gathered for a Council Dinner at Primi Piatti Ristorante, in Washington, D.C., Feb. 4, 2011, with guest of honor **Sue Pompeani Palka**, FOX 5 WTTG-TV's chief meteorologist.

For more than 25 years, Palka has calmly talked Washingtonians through the worst of snow and ice storms. NIAF Board member **Dr. John P. Rosa** introduced Palka and spoke about the Foundation's mission, its prominent leadership and notable guest. In giving Palka a warm welcome, Dr. Rosa was joined by the Foundation's area coordi-

nators and more than 40 council members.

Palka took the opportunity to talk of her Italian ancestors, who hailed from Ripa Fagnano Alto, in the region of Abruzzo, and what she learned from her Italian side of the family: The importance of having a strong work ethic, taking care of people and being hospitable.



NIAF Board Member Dr. John P. Rosa and FOX5 Weathercaster Sue Pompeani Palka



NIAF Council Members Ross Vicenti and Dr. Andrea Giacometti speak with FOX 5 Weather Forecasters Sue Pompeani Palka and Gwen Tolbart

## NIAF Board Members Dinner at Tramonti Italian Restaurant

NIAF Board Members enjoyed the culinary artistry and stylish ambiance of the acclaimed **Tramonti Italian Restaurant**, in Delray Beach, Fla., Jan. 29, 2011. Over more than 40 years years, owner **Gino Silvestri**'s passion for fine Italian cuisine made Angelo's of Mulberry Street the top choice for Italian dining in Lower Manhattan's Little Italy. And, he and his son Marco have brought the same tradition and standards to Tramonti. During the dinner, NIAF President **Joseph V. Del Raso** awarded Silvestri a NIAF Certificate of Acknowledgement in recognition of Tramonti's commitment to culinary excellence.



Tramonti owner Gino Silvestri (center) receives a NIAF Certificate of Acknowledgement from (L to R) NIAF Executive Vice President the Hon. Marie L. Garibaldi, NIAF Board Member Matthew J. DiDomenico, Sr., NIAF president Joseph V. Del Raso, NIAF Board Members Kenneth J. Aspromonte and Linda R. Carozzi, and NIAF Vice Chairman Paul J. Chiapparone



## Travel With NIAF This Spring and Summer

### Join NIAF for Your 2011 Trips to Italy's Lake Region

This is a journey through breathtaking landscapes, enchanting rustic towns and gastronomical delights that you'll never forget. Your seven-night vacation traveling with NIAF and Unitours will leave you feeling relaxed and rejuvenated after resting by Italy's scenic lakesides. While visiting these picturesque lakes, you will also have the opportunity to spend a day in Milan, Italy's fashion capital and home to the majestic Duomo and Teatro della Scala Opera House. For details, visit [www.niaf.org](http://www.niaf.org) and click "Travel," or contact NIAF's partner, Unitours, at 1-888-846-6423.

### Take NIAF's Southern Lights Tour

Naples, Sorrento and Pompeii on your must-see list? Now's the time to sign up for NIAF and Perillo Italy Vacations' 2011 Southern Lights Tour for nine days and seven nights exploring undiscovered parts of Italy as well as visiting your favorite popular sights, including visits to Naples, Amalfi, San Giovanni Rotundo and Gargano. For details, visit [www.niaf.org](http://www.niaf.org) and click "Travel," or call 1-800-Italy-25.

### Greek Islands Cruise in 2011!

NIAF and Trek Tours Ltd. are pleased to present a 10 Night Greek Isles Cruise with date through the summer and early fall. This fascinating journey of the most beautiful coastlines and ports of the Mediterranean will include visits to Venice (Italy), Split (Croatia), Corfu (Greece), Athens (Greece) and Mykonos, Greece, and other picturesque and ancient locations while aboard the magnificent cruise ship Splendour of the Seas.

For details, visit [www.niaf.org](http://www.niaf.org) and click "Travel," or call Pam Salimeno at NIAF's partner, Trek Tours, at 1-800-370-0357.



## Calendar

### MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

NIAF is offering the following special events in the coming months, so mark your calendars. And Visit [www.niaf.org](http://www.niaf.org) to learn more!

#### NIAF/IACD Official Congressional Italia 150th Anniversary Reception

Date: March 17, 2011

Location: Washington, D.C., at the U.S. Senate, Mansfield Room (S-207)

Under the auspices of the Frank J. Guarini Policy Forums on Capitol Hill, this VIP reception is open to NIAF Council Members, 4 p.m. – 6 p.m.

Contact: Email Johnny Strada at [JStrada@NIAF.org](mailto:JStrada@NIAF.org)

#### NIAF Council Wine Reception and Tasting in Baltimore

Date: March 23, 2011

Location: Da Mimmo Restaurant, 217 South High St., Baltimore, Md.

Wine tasting and cooking demonstration by Da Mimmo's executive chef with a past tasting. Open to Council Members, 6 p.m. – 8 p.m., \$35 per person inclusive.

Contact: RSVP to Beatrice Santacroce at [Beatrice@niaf.org](mailto:Beatrice@niaf.org)

#### NIAF Frank J. Guarini Public Policy Forum Luncheon

Date: March 24, 2011

Location: University Of Maryland School Of Medicine, Southern Management Corp. Campus Center, 621 West Lombard St., Room 208, Baltimore, MD

A component of the NIAF Distinguished Speaker Series, the luncheon is free and open to NIAF Council Members and features keynote speaker Dr. Thomas Scalea, physician-in-chief at the University of Maryland R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center. Topic: "Injury as a Global Issue: Shock Trauma's Experience and Impact." 12 noon – 1:30 p.m.

Contact: RSVP at [www.NIAF.org/policyRSVP](http://www.NIAF.org/policyRSVP) or email Johnny Strada at [JStrada@NIAF.org](mailto:JStrada@NIAF.org)

#### Frankie Valli Concert

Date: April 3, 2011

Location: Theatre at Westbury, 960 Brush Hollow Road, New York, N.Y.

Following the show by the "Four Seasons" great, Frankie Valli, NIAF members are invited to attend a dessert reception with Frankie Valli.

Time: 7 p.m., \$250 priority seats, \$150 standard seats.

Contact: Rebecca Bartello at 202-939-3114 or email [rebecca@niaf.org](mailto:rebecca@niaf.org)

#### NIAF Frank J. Guarini

#### Public Policy Forum on Capitol Hill

Date: April 21, 2011

Location: U.S. Congress, Rayburn Gold Room

Luncheon is open to NIAF Council Members and features keynote speaker John Castellani, the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA), 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Contact: Email Johnny Strada at [JStrada@NIAF.org](mailto:JStrada@NIAF.org)

#### West Coast Gala

Date: May 19, 2011

Location: Fairmont Miramar Hotel & Bungalows in Santa Monica, Calif.

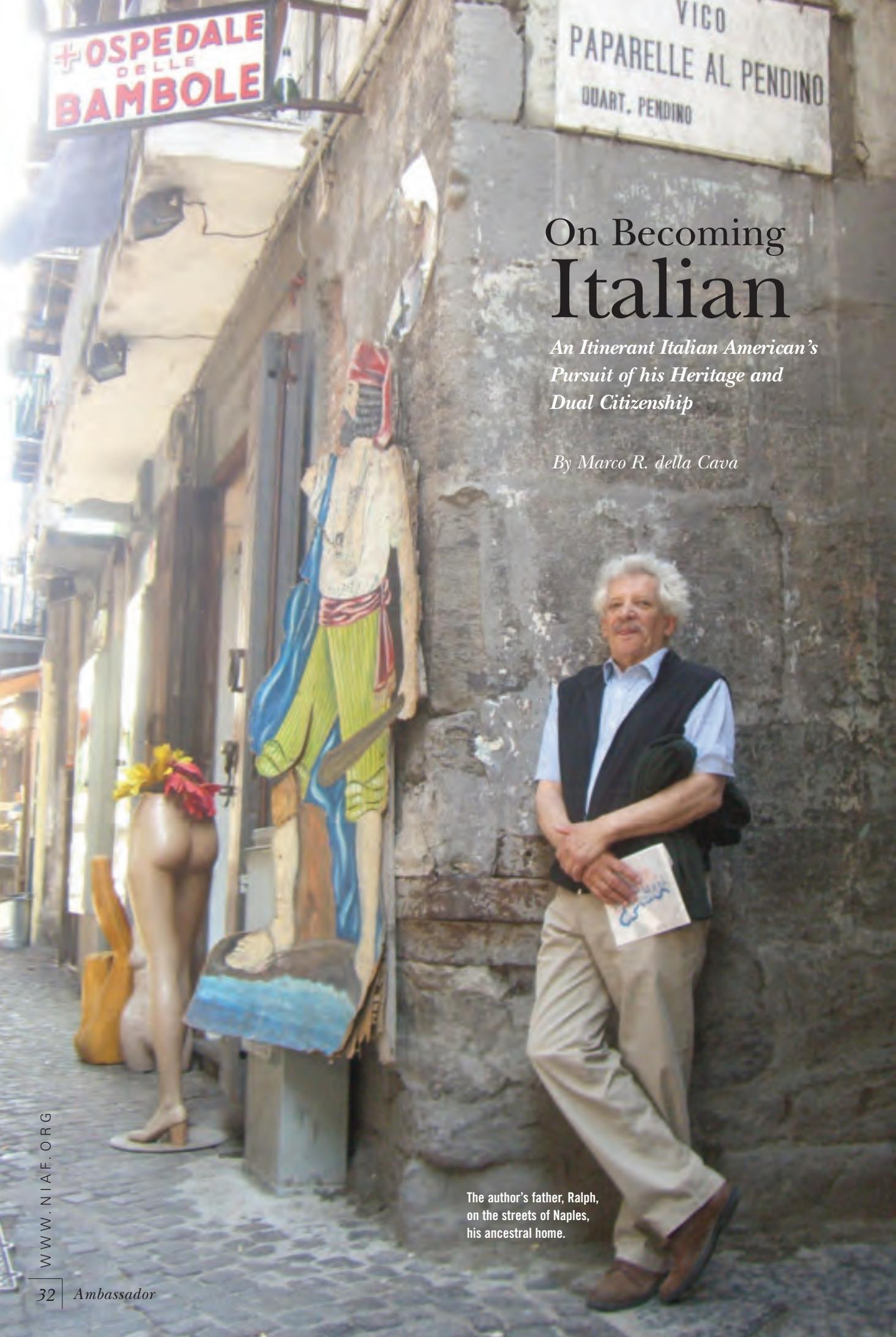
Reception, 6:30 p.m., dinner, 7:30 p.m.

Online Registration is available at: [www.niaf.org/west-coastgala](http://www.niaf.org/west-coastgala). For sponsorship and ticket information, contact Jerry Jones at 202/939-3102 or [jerry@niaf.org](mailto:jerry@niaf.org).



As the leading Italian American organization in the United States and Italy with more than 100,000 supporters, the **National Italian American Foundation (NIAF)** works to promote the culture and heritage of Italian Americans. We're branching out to help you connect with us online—go to [www.niaf.org](http://www.niaf.org)





# On Becoming Italian

*An Itinerant Italian American's Pursuit of his Heritage and Dual Citizenship*

By Marco R. della Cava

The author's father, Ralph, on the streets of Naples, his ancestral home.



The author and his father, Ralph Della Cava, in 2007, in Afragola, Italy, Ralph's grandfather's hometown.

**F**unny story. The year is 1997, and I have just helped open USA Today's first European bureau in London. There's a small party at the home of a colleague. His wife strolls up, introduces herself, and after a few minutes of conversation exclaims, "You know, you speak such good English."

Well, yes. That is what one learns growing up on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. But my name—lilting, vowel-packed and impossibly Italian—confused her. And, to be honest, me too.

I am proudly American—the third generation of della Cavas to be born on these shores. But I lived in Italy as a kid, and that experience proved so profound and downright personality altering that, decades later, I would be moved to become a dual citizen. Last year, after much multi-generational, bureaucratic hoop-jumping, I received my Italian citizenship. But for me, that aubergine-colored passport staring at me from the bottom drawer of my bureau isn't simply an Italian passport. It is truly a passport into another me. A different me. Certainly no better or worse than the American version, but nevertheless a me that now has a home.

Although I grew up in New York, fate and my father's job as a university professor and researcher took our family of five to Rome in 1971. I was nine, and would spend the next two years morphing into not just an Italian, but a true denizen of the Eternal City. For a while, I didn't speak Italian, but rather spat out words almost exclusively in *romanaccio* slang. Not long ago, my mother unearthed an audio cassette of me telling jokes in Italian. When I explained the punch lines in English, you could barely understand me so heavy was the accent.

My immersion was total. Friends made sure I knew all the appropriate curse words and exclamations of joy so we could verbally stone or praise our favored soccer teams. I attended a local public school named after Italy's fabled patriot, Giuseppe Mazzini, and got hammered across the knuckles with a ruler just like the other kids. I joined a den of the Lupetti, Italy's equivalent of the Cub Scouts, which somehow managed to mix a passion for daily prayer with a commitment to off-beat sketch comedy and the occasional track-and-field competition. I even spent four weeks with the late legendary

## *That's the question, isn't it? Am I Italian?*

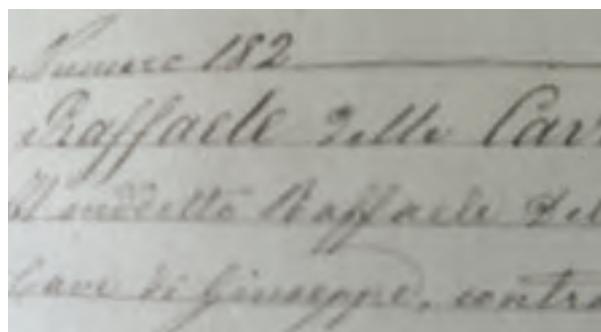
*In spirit, unquestionably and irrevocably.*

*Legally? It was time.*

actor and neo-realist director Vittorio de Sica, working as his co-star in a Hallmark Hall of Fame TV movie of Paul Gallico's "The Small Miracle." The casting was pure serendipity; it was a rainy day, my mother noticed an open call for young actors. Three script-readings later, I was on location in Assisi playing the orphan Peppino to his Father D'Amico, the last acting role in de Sica's storied cinematic career. So you could say I moved to Italy. But, really, Italy moved into me.

The ensuing decades stateside found me consciously seeking out ways to hang onto the Italian me. In our New Jersey living room, I'd tune to fuzzy UHF channels on our black-and-white TV just to watch weekly Italian soccer highlights. I studied French, mainly because it made me feel closer to Italy. And when my mother brought over a visiting Italian family one day, I was thrilled to learn they had two boys and planned to stay in New York for a few years. One of those two boys is among my closest friends to this day, and our commitment to staying in touch is a big reason I am still fluent in the language of Dante. A quick note on my mother, Olha: She is Ukrainian, and she came to this country in 1949. Technically, that makes me more Ukrainian than Italian. But while I can understand that language and have lived in Kiev, I have always felt more Italian. To her credit, my mother has never taken me to task for that, and has always encouraged my passion for *il bel paese*.

Italy even played a big role in my professional awakening. I was awarded a fellowship at college that granted me a summer to travel around the peninsula and chronicle those wanderings. That lit the journalistic fuse that still burns brightly in me. In just over two decades of reporting for USA Today, I've covered wars, awards shows and earthquakes. But arguably few assignments were as personally thrilling as the ones I got to do in Italy, from chronicles of Ferraris racing in the Mille Miglia road race to the election of a new pope. I will confess to some glee whenever I told Italian interview subjects that I was reporting for USA Today. Their faces betrayed complete confusion, "Ma, non ho capito, non sei italiano?" ▶



Close up of the author's great-grandfather's name as inscribed in the records of the town of Afragola, Italy.

That's the question, isn't it? Am I Italian? In spirit, unquestionably and irrevocably. Legally? It was time.

My father, Ralph, is to be credited with any official tether I now have to Italy. In 2005, after retiring from Queens College as a professor of Latin American history, he began to collect the documents necessary to apply for citizenship through his late grandfather. Raffaele Delle Cava—at the time, the family name was the plural of what it would become—was a lighthouse keeper overseeing the busy Port of Naples. Seeking the new start that enticed all immigrants, he booked passage aboard the S.S. Citta' di Napoli and pulled up at Ellis Island on Aug. 26, 1903. He soon made the Bronx home and had nine children. One of them, Salvatore, became my father's father. My father, Ralph, was the family's anglicized tribute to Raffaele.

One interesting twist of fate gave Ralph the green light to pursue his Italian citizenship: Raffaele became a naturalized American citizen in 1925, well after his children were born. Had Raffaele sought this status before the birth of his son Salvatore, his grandson Ralph would have been legally ineligible for Italian citizenship.

The documents my father had to procure were standard items—certificates of birth, marriage and death. But finding some of them provided a hunt

**Vintage photo of the author's great-grandfather, Raffaele Delle Cava, then 21, as a private in the Italian Army, with his sister Filomena.**



**Raffaele Delle Cava (seated), who changed his name from delle Cava in the 1910s in the Bronx, with sons: Louis on knee and (l to r) Antonio, Albert and Salvatore.**



**The author's father, Ralph Della Cava (left), searching for genealogical documents in the town hall of Afragola, Italy, with Eduardo Maiello, retired director of the records office.**

worthy of Detective Columbo and included visits to musty parishes and calls to aging records keepers. The search for his parents' marriage certificate literally solved a family mystery. The Della Cava kids grew up without seeing official wedding photos of their parents, though a pewter jewelry box resting in a dresser drawer featured scenes from Niagara Falls. The suspicion that Salvatore and Florence eloped was confirmed when, seven decades later, their son tracked down a marriage certificate issued by the town clerk of Pound Ridge, N.Y., a burgh that had never been mentioned in the Della Cava home.

In February, 2006, my father submitted his paperwork to the Italian consulate in New York. And he waited. A year passed and still no word. In the spring of 2007, I met up with my father in Naples. We took a public bus about 10 miles inland to the town of Afragola, Raffaele's hometown. There, we met with Edoardo Maiello, a longtime official in the city's records office, or anagrafe, who proved instrumental in navigating the maze of public records. More than a decade earlier, Ralph and Signor Maiello had become friends when my father visited the *anagrafe* out of simple curiosity about his family's roots, never thinking that one day the evidence of those roots would plant him in that same soil.

But a full year after that Neapolitan jaunt, my father was still waiting. Then, in April, 2008, he received a postcard from Afragola urging him to vote in the upcoming presidential elections. Could it be? My father called the consulate. He was indeed a citizen and had been since a month after he applied in 2006. Given the large numbers of applications for citizenship (appointments in most Italian consulates now are booked a year in advance), he was supposed to call to check on his status. A simple misunderstanding. But perhaps finding out by postcard from your hometown is the way it really should be after all.

My own route to citizenship was comparatively simple. As I sat with my father, his brother Neil, and Neil's son, Neil Jr., in the ornate offices of the Italian Consulate in San Francisco, the official opposite us looked at the stack of documents we'd prepared and shrugged. Then she smiled: "Fratello del cittadino, figlio del cittadino, nipote del cittadino, molto semplice."

*I asked my father what his motivation was for starting this Italian citizenship quest. He thought about it, then answered simply, "I did it for you kids, really . . .*

Brother, son and nephew of a citizen, simple. And it was. Months later we were invited back to pay for our passports. Perhaps it hadn't hurt that in that wonderfully small world way, the official overseeing our paperwork not only knew of Afragola, her brother had been born there.

Over the past year or two, my sisters Mirka and Didi have received their Italian citizenship. And I'm in the process of applying on behalf of my pre-teen boys, Nicholas and Sebastian, and perhaps later my wife, Courtney. For the boys, perhaps more than for the rest of us adults, there is an emotional as well as practical benefit to being Italian, should they wish to study or work there when they grow up. For these young Americans, their Italian passports will literally be doors they can walk through which, ultimately, will only reflect well on a United States that is determined to be a force in this increasingly borderless world.

I asked my father what his motivation was for starting this Italian citizenship quest. He thought about it, then answered simply, "I did it for you kids, really . . . I guess I feel like I gave you back the heritage of your great-grandparents and a piece of one of the greatest cultures humanity has shared in."



**The author and his family, left to right, Sebastian, 6, Marco, Courtney and Nicholas, 9.**

Indeed, to be a part of a people that established the Foro Romano, created La Commedia dell'Arte and nurtured the Oscar-winning wit of Roberto Benigni is something to blush over. That said, it will take a lot less to make me proud. Like walking through customs at Leonardo da Vinci Airport, hearing the officer ask "Italiano?" and me answering quietly, "Si." ▲

*Marco R. della Cava lives in San Francisco and writes about popular culture for USA TODAY.*

The National Italian American Foundation (NIAF), in conjunction with the Embassy of Italy, offers a free, online Italian Citizenship Questionnaire to facilitate your research and pursuit of Italian citizenship. Visit <http://www.niaf.org/citizenship>.

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(S. Johnson)

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# From Pond Scum to Power Crop

*Guido Radaelli is Harnessing the Power of Photosynthesis from Algae That May One Day Feed and Fuel the World*

By Patricia L. Beemer

That light-green algae may look like pond scum to you, but to Guido Radaelli, it's a wonder crop that has the potential to power our future and feed the world's growing population—all while using minimal resources and having a negative carbon footprint.

Radaelli's company, Aurora Algae, grows optimized strains of marine algae on non-arable land, using little more than seawater, sunlight and industrial carbon dioxide emissions. At a time when "sustainability" is a buzzword, Aurora Algae's technology is in the early stages of yielding an extraordinarily versatile crop in an exceptionally environmentally-friendly way.

Aurora was co-founded in 2006 by Radaelli, Matt Caspary and Bertrand Vick, who joined forces as graduate students at the University of California, Berkeley.

Of course, the three are not the first to suggest using algae to create biofuels. The idea has been around for decades but has always faltered on the issue of mass production. In the meantime, more traditional crops, such as soy, canola, corn and sugar cane, have been turned to this use. However, the scientific community has come to view these alternate fuel sources as a dead end, given the rapid growth of the world's population and the finite availability of fresh water and fertile land.

"Growing crops [for fuel] with fresh water is not a sustainable solution. There's simply not enough fresh water for everyone 50 years from now," says Radaelli, explaining that as people in developing nations start eating more meat, more fresh water will be consumed in its production,

further straining limited supplies. "Producing biofuels with traditional crops would just increase the problem which is already there."

Like fresh water, he continues, "fertile land is actually very limited, unless you start chopping down rainforests in Africa or the Far East. So it means that we have to meet the global food demand and the global feedstock demand with the existing fertile land. So if you want to make biofuels, the only way to do it is to not use fertile land. And, of course, our technology utilizes desert-like land—so, land that cannot be used for anything else."

The clean-tech startup has recently begun operations in a demonstration plant in Karratha, a small town on Western Australia's Northwest Shelf, two hours north of Perth. ►



The pilot facility at Vero Beach, Fla., where Aurora proved its algae harvesting technology on a small scale.



Petri dish growing select algae at Aurora's Alameda labs



A selection of Aurora's optimized strains of algae

This follows a successful three-year pilot project in Vero Beach, Fla., in which Aurora proved its technology on a very small scale with realistic conditions.

"Unfortunately," says Radaelli, "Florida is not ideal to scale up, so we decided to go all the way to Australia because conditions there are much better for the commercial production."

Arid and barren, the North West Shelf is famous for its huge deposits of natural gas and, at first glance, would seem an unlikely venue for any sort of agricultural enterprise. Nevertheless, it offers exactly what Aurora needs to grow algae on a large scale: minimal rainfall, abundant sunshine, limitless seawater, cheap land and a virtually inexhaustible supply of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) from the region's many natural gas-processing plants.

Aurora Algae had its genesis as an entry in the 2006 Berkeley Business Plan Competition at the University of California Berkeley's Haas School of Business, where Radaelli and Matt Caspari were students. They teamed up with Bertrand Vick, then a doctoral student in Berkeley's biology

department. "They were both looking for new ideas in the so-called bio-energy space; that was the hottest space in the clean-tech area," Radaelli says of his partners. The three found they shared an interest in applying cutting-edge biology and biotechnology to produce energy, and they set out to create a practical means to produce biofuels from algae.

Radaelli had chosen to pursue his MBA at Berkeley because of its proximity to the Silicon Valley. While earning his MS degree in engineering at Politecnico di Milano and, for a year thereafter, researching semiconductors in cooperation with MIT, he'd planned to seek his fortune in the high-tech field. Once he arrived in California, though, he realized that high technology's years of exponential growth were behind it.

"I understood that the semiconductor business was actually very mature, and there wasn't a whole lot of research and dramatic innovation going on in that sector," he says.

The new trend, he found, was in the field of so-called "clean tech"—industries producing products and services using renewable resources and creating minimal waste. Radaelli had spent seven years developing petrochemical- and natural-gas

The trio met with the professor, licensed his technology, and entered UC Berkeley's Business Plan Competition with their proposal to start a company that would grow algae for biofuel production. The judges were impressed, and the trio won the competition—which brought not only a \$30,000 prize but, more importantly, a lot of attention from Silicon Valley's venture capital community. Before long, three venture capital firms, Oak Investment Partners, Gabriel Venture Partners and Noventi, united to fund the initial startup phase and, by the end of 2006, Aurora Biofuels was created in Alameda, Calif.

The company's first task was to prove that it was, in fact, possible to double algae's productivity. As it turned out, Professor Melis' idea to do so didn't pan out. "The problem," says Radaelli, "was that he demonstrated his idea...inside a 'model organism,' which is a microorganism that can only live in the lab, which is not really practical."

Aurora was able to find its own ways to achieve extraordinary efficiencies in algae production. First, it used biotechnology to create a so-called "super algae." Radaelli emphasizes that the company does not use genetically modified organisms. Instead, he says, "We

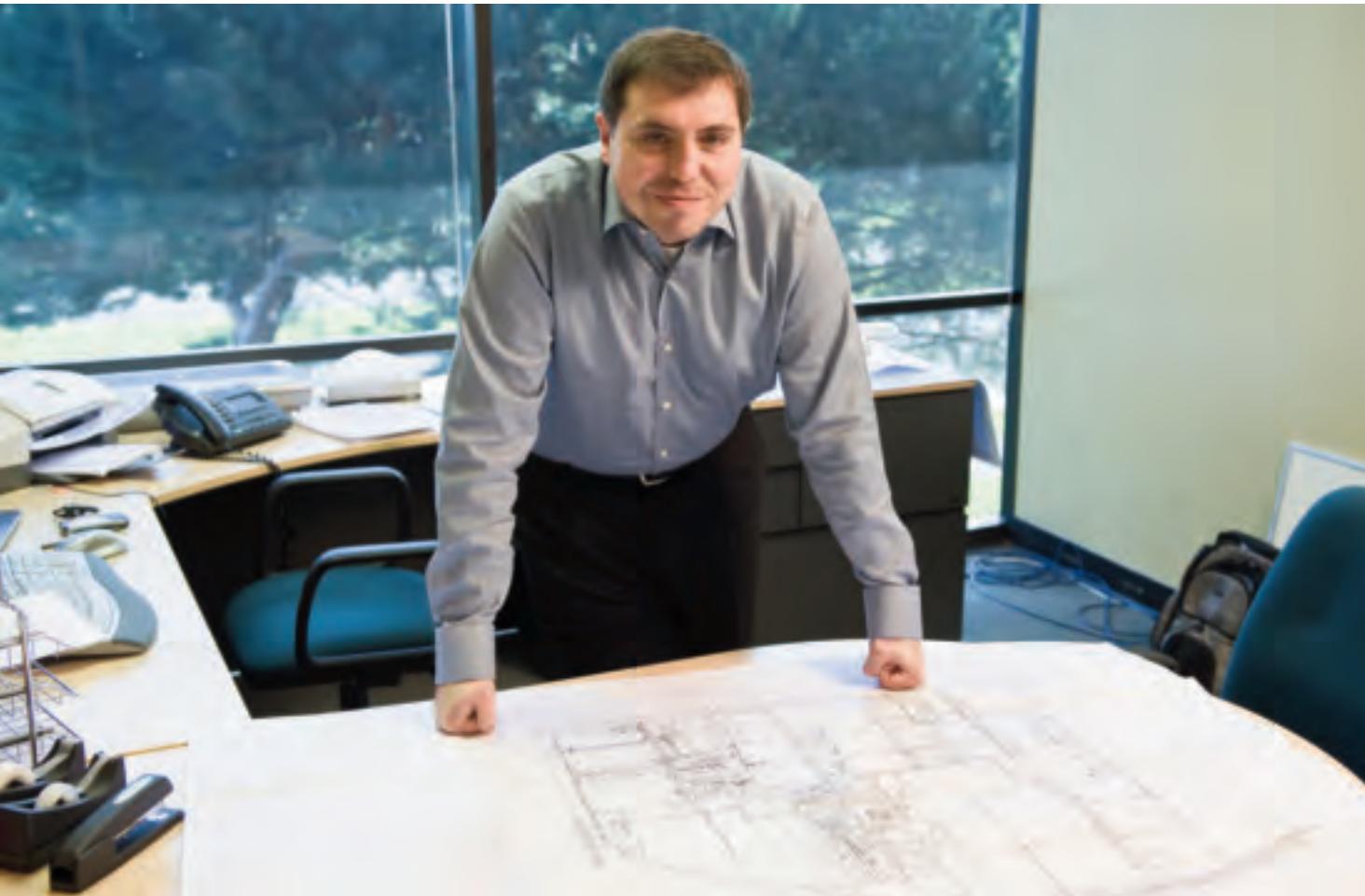
## ***The new trend was in the field of so-called "clean tech" —industries producing products and services using renewable resources and creating minimal waste. . .***

processing technologies as well as consulting to worldwide clients in those industries, so developing sustainable biofuel sources seemed like a natural fit for him.

One of the greatest challenges to using algae to produce biofuels is the plants' rate of growth; the longer they take to grow, the more costly production is. Radaelli, Caspari and Vick began to investigate Berkeley-patented technologies to see if any of them showed promise in accelerating growth. They came upon a method developed by Professor Anastasios Melis to double algae's growth rate.

select the algae; we isolate the ones we think are better for our purposes. Even within the certain strain of algae . . . we select the cells that are better suited for our process, so there is an optimization process. And so that produces the unique strain of algae that we utilize."

Additionally, Aurora developed production processes with unique efficiencies, from how the growing ponds are constructed and mixed to how CO<sub>2</sub> is injected into them. Once the algae are grown, harvesting presents its own challenges. Algae cultures are very dilute, which



Guido Radaelli at Aurora's headquarters in Alameda, Calif.

requires that any harvesting process must be capable of separating single cells from the water. Rather than employing the traditional method of centrifuging the water out of the culture, Aurora

Along the way, it became clear that Aurora's algae could be used to produce a range of valuable products beyond biofuels. It yields a high-potency Omega-3 oil, an attractive alternative to fish

lengen that is practically universal to startup companies, Radaelli explains, "We want to be as profitable as possible in the shortest term, and we [will be able to] make biodiesel profitably, but only on a very large scale.

"In order to get there, we need a lot of capital and a lot of time. By simply adding new products to our portfolio, we can boost the economics of our process and get to profitability in a much tighter time frame, which also would be a great stepping stone into the biofuel-centric production."

Today, Radaelli is Aurora's vice president for engineering. He sets the course of the company's proprietary technology and oversees its implementation through the design, procurement and construction of facilities, from the lab to large-scale production. Caspari is the company's managing director and oversees the company's Australian operations. Vick is the company's chief scientific officer. The company has dozens of ►

looked to the wastewater industry for new ideas. It developed its own proprietary technology, which extracts the algae with a minimum consumption of chemicals and power.

Once Aurora had developed its algae strains and its production and harvesting processes, it raised a second round of venture capital and set up a pilot plant in Vero Beach, Fla. Over three years, it proved the viability of Aurora's technology on a small scale. Last year, the company secured a third round of venture capital that allowed it to build its facility in Australia and begin production.

oils for nutritional supplements and pharmaceuticals. It also contains a high-quality, allergen-free protein, which can be added to food and used in nutritional supplements. The remaining algae mass becomes a nutritious, protein-rich feed for fish and animals. These products—particularly the Omega-3 oil—show great promise for bringing Aurora to profitability far more quickly than biofuels alone.

For this reason, Aurora decided in 2010 to expand its portfolio to include these products, and it changed its name accordingly to Aurora Algae. Describing a chal-



Guido Radaelli inspects one of the elements of his proprietary engineering process.

patents filed for its innovations in science and engineering, and it has approximately 70 employees.

Together with an executive team brought in by the company's investors, the trio faces the challenges of scaling up Aurora's production to commercial levels in the new facility in Australia. "The other big challenge, of course, is to build a company and get total support through the industry, prove that our products are really what we say they are and get sales contracts," says Radaelli.

Getting the Australian facility running leaves Radaelli with little

spare time.

When he is home in Oakland, Calif., he likes motorcycling with his wife, Federica Sarti, who is pursuing a PhD in molecular biology at UC Berkeley. "California's coast, of course, is an ideal scenario for road trips," he says. While he rides a Honda, her wheels reflect a fitting appreciation for Italian engineering and design. "She has a Ducati." ▲

*Patricia L. Beemer is a freelance writer living in Orange County, Calif. She has profiled scientists, business leaders and athletes for Ambassador.*

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# Coin of the Realm

**IN THE ERA OF THE EURO, THE ITALIAN LIRA STILL CASTS A LONG SHADOW**

By Joseph Luzzi

*“Hanno raddoppiato tutto”*  
 (“They doubled everything”), the taxi driver announced as he drove me to Florence’s Vespucci airport on a gray winter day in January, 2010.

By “they” he was referring to Italy’s restaurateurs, salespeople, stall operators, shop owners, and other purveyors of goods and services who reputedly doubled prices in an epochal currency transition in 1998. On January 1 of that year, the venerable lira, official Italian currency since August 24, 1862, was officially replaced by the euro, symbol of Europe’s increased interdependence and drive for a common market and “continental” sense of identity.

The cabdriver’s words reflect

the popular belief in Italy that merchants exploited the transition by moving the decimal point on the bulbous lira prices a few places to the left, so that something that once cost 7,000 lire (for example, a pizza) now costs 7 euro, and so forth. Since 1 euro equaled 1,937 in *vecchie* lire (“old lire”) in 1998, this basically means that the pizza now costs almost twice its original price.

As Italy celebrates its 150th anniversary this year, it is fitting to reflect upon the symbiotic link between the history of the nation and its first currency. The word “lira” traces its roots to the Latin for “pound” (*libra*). It was used as a mode of economic measurement and exchange in the Italian

peninsula as far back as the reign of the Emperor Charlemagne in the eighth century.

When King Victor Emmanuel II made the lira the official currency of the new Kingdom of Italy in 1862, there were dozens of other monies in circulation. Tuscany alone had some two dozen different forms of currency. Alongside the widespread use of gold and silver, the lira had difficulty establishing itself during the first few decades of unification.

The government resorted to acts, such as the *corso forzoso* (“forced circulation”) that prohibited the convertibility of the paper lira into gold and silver to ensure the widespread use of banknotes. Still, by 1885, banknotes represented only one-tenth of the nation’s money supply, according to Charles Kindleberger’s “A Financial History of Western Europe.” National financial unity, like national unity itself, occurred only gradually and after great struggle.

When the lira was introduced in the 1860s, the new Italian nation experienced high rates of illiteracy. In “The Force of Destiny: A History of Italy Since 1796,” Christopher Duggan estimates that only 22 percent of the population could read “Italian” (the Tuscan-derived official language) in 1861, and a mere 10 percent used this standard tongue in everyday speech.

So images on Italian banknotes were one of the few things the populace could actually “read,” which opened the lira to a variety of interpretations. The lira, of course, was not just a neutral blank slate that denoted a given quantity; it was a canvas that recorded and diffused the projec-►

**“NATIONAL FINANCIAL UNITY, LIKE NATIONAL UNITY ITSELF, OCCURRED ONLY GRADUALLY AND AFTER GREAT STRUGGLE.”**



IN ITALY



tions and passions of the nation.

For example, whereas Victor Emmanuel II adorned an early 1 lira coin from 1863, 135 years later in 1998, at the time of its replacement by the euro, the most pervasive banknote in Italy was likely the 1,000 lire note displaying Maria Montessori, the influential children's educator whose name now graces nursery schools throughout the world. For a culture long defined by its masculine hierarchies and patriarchal power structures, the choice of Montessori revealed the government's welcomed acknowledgement of the achievements of women.

A survey of the other figures on the banknotes during the year of the lira's enforced obsolescence reveals a gallery of notable Italians from different spheres of life: the inventor of the radio, Guglielmo Marconi (2,000 lire); the opera composer, Vincenzo Bellini (5,000 lire); the 19th-century physicist and inventor of the battery, Alessandro Volta (10,000 lire); and a trio of renowned artists in the upper echelons of currency denomination, Gian Lorenzo Bernini (50,000 lire), Caravaggio (100,000 lire), and Raphael (500,000 lire). The aesthetics of this last princely sum draws, appropriately enough, on the acclaimed self-portrait painted by Raphael in 1506 that now hangs in Florence's Uffizi.



**“NOT SURPRISINGLY, MANY ITALIANS WERE LOATH TO SEE THE LIRA GO, AND THE ANIMUS AGAINST THE EURO HAS LINGERED.”**

Not surprisingly, many Italians were loath to see the lira go, and the animus against the euro has lingered. A 2005 London Times article by Anthony Browne and Richard Owens described how a chain of Tuscan supermarkets enjoyed a surge in business after “pledging to accept the Italian lira alongside the euro, cashing in on the growing popular resentment...Italian newspapers

showed shop assistants holding posters declaring 'Welcome back lira.'

While perhaps a publicity stunt, it nonetheless conveyed the anger many Italians continued to feel over the rise in cost of living since the euro's introduction.►



One political party, not surprisingly the ultra nationalist and conservative Lega Nord, made the “return to the lira” a platform of their political program.

The London Times article estimated that two-thirds of Italians still had problems with the euro. One poll showed that a full quarter wanted to return to the lira. Mark Mardell of the BBC wrote in 2006 that “just about everyone I meet in Italy detests the euro and says it is why prices go up, but wages don’t.”

Jeffrey Fleishman of the Los Angeles Times observed in 2010 that, in the wake of the recent Greek financial crisis that roiled international markets, many Italian pensioners “spend less time pondering their European-ness than they do fretting over why the euro buys them fewer cuts of chicken than their lire once did.”

After the taxi deposited me at the Florentine airport, I made the usual purchases at the newsstand and café before boarding my flight. As I mentally calculated these costs, I couldn’t help but sympathize with the driver. Prices do seem to have gone up, partly because of the dollar’s current weakness vis-à-vis the euro. Just a few days before, I’d taken one colleague to lunch to the tune of 40 euro (about \$54), and then another for a 56

euro (\$76) dinner—hardly exorbitant, but still rather high for the humble trattorie we’d eaten in.

Economics aside, it’s hard to fall in love with the bureaucratic-looking euro, especially when I reflect on my own relationship with the lira. The first time I studied in Italy, in 1987, I opened an account in one of the sumptuous banks in Florence’s Via Cavour area. After depositing a few hundred dollars, lo and behold, I suddenly had hundreds of thousand of lire I felt rich. The feeling quickly disappeared when I spent my first few thousand lire on sundry items like panini and pastry.

The lira, for me as for so many others, is a symbol of Italy. And as the nation turns 150, one does well to remember the lira both for its contributions to Italian political unity and its ongoing purchase in the public memory. Though no longer legal tender, the lira remains the coin of the realm for understanding the past of this once-fragmented



nation as it continues, often dragging its feet, along the path of European integration. ▲

*Joseph Luzzi, associate professor of Italian and director of Italian Studies at Bard College, is the author of “Romantic Europe and the Ghost of Italy” (Yale University Press, 2008). His audio course “In Michelangelo’s Shadow: The Mystery of Modern Italy” appeared in 2010.*



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A P P R E C I A T I O N :

# Joseph R. Cerrell

*By Don Oldenburg*



There was the time when Joe Cerrell was driving John F. Kennedy through Los Angeles, maybe 1960, before the Democratic National Convention that nominated JFK. Just the two of them, no Secret Service, no police escort, nobody recognizing the young and charismatic U.S. senator—or Joe, for that matter.

Kennedy turned to Joe and said he wants to go to Mass. Joe steered into the first Catholic Church he sees. When the offering plate came around, Joe put in \$5 and passed it to Kennedy,

who hesitated and said, “Joe, I don’t have any money. Put some money in the plate.”

Those were days when Joe was young and cash-strapped. He pulled out \$5 and Kennedy whispered, “That won’t do, Joe, put in at least a twenty.” Joe reaches deeper for his only \$20 bill and said, “That’s a lot of money, senator.” Years later, Joe’s favorite part of the story was that Kennedy never paid him back. JFK owed Joe.

When Joseph R. Cerrell died on Dec. 3, 2010, at the age of 75, with his loving family by his side, so many people, like Kennedy, one way or another, owed Joe. ►



**Joe Cerrell in a private conversation with John F. Kennedy**

**(Below) Joe Cerrell in 1960 riding through a tickertape parade down L.A.'s Broadway with John F. Kennedy, who was elected president the next week.**



**President Bill Clinton and Joe Cerrell**

Before there was such a thing as a “political consultant,” there was Joe Cerrell. Over five decades and countless campaigns, he defined the profession. In 1956, he was a student at the University of Southern California, president of USC’s Trojan Democratic Club, when Democratic Party officials asked him to arrange for Kennedy to speak on campus.

Kennedy was a little-known U.S. Senator from Massachusetts, but the real problem was that he was coming during “stop week,” when the campus shuts down just before exams. On a rainy Friday, 35 people showed up to hear the nervous young senator who would soon emerge into the national spotlight and make history. Joe was emerging, too, as the Democratic party’s trusted advance man in Southern California.

That summer, Joe watched the Democratic National Convention in Chicago from Kennedy’s family box. After helping power-broker Jesse Unruh win his General Assembly race and Edmund G. “Pat” Brown win the gubernatorial election, Joe, at 24, became the youngest ever executive director of the California Democratic Party.

Not that Joe was out to save the world back then, but his love of politics and knack for getting things done put him at the forefront of a new political era. In the coming years, he handled other candidates who fill the pages of history books—among them, Adlai Stevenson, Lyndon Johnson, Hubert Humphrey, Lloyd Bentsen, John Glenn and Al Gore. A lot of Joe’s favorite stories

about them put him behind the wheel—of a car, or a campaign.

Once, early on, Joe scheduled Kennedy for an event in little Lompoc, Calif. Joe was driving JFK down this isolated road into the boondocks and the senator was wondering why. Joe asked the county chairwoman accompanying them when the last time Gov. Pat Brown was in Lompoc? Never, she said. Neither had anyone else on the political radar. As Kennedy boarded the plane later to leave, he thanked Joe and, referring to a rival, said, “Make sure you take Stuart Symington to Lompoc.”

“For a guy who prided himself on being right on the button, that didn’t turn out so well,” says Steve Bullock, the oldest of the Cerrell children and CFO of Cerrell Associates, the full-service public relations and political consulting firm Joe founded in 1966. “But it’s all that larger-than-life stuff. Joe was part of the Camelot story.”

Most of Joe’s stories tell of political astuteness and proximity to power instead of Lompoc. When LBJ visited L.A. once, he had a bad back and wanted a massage. To avoid issues of hiring a masseuse, Joe found a blind masseur who never knew his client’s identity.

Another time, Joe was driving one of his favorite politicians, Hubert Humphrey, to the airport, racing to make the flight. When Humphrey couldn’t take it anymore, he grabbed Joe’s arm and said, “Joe, I’d rather be Hubert Humphrey late than the late Hubert Humphrey.”

Perhaps no surprise: Politics brought together Joe and his wife, Lee. Their paths first crossed in 1957, the year Joe graduated from USC. Lee Bullock was volunteering at the local Democratic headquarters. “Joe says he saw me at a Democratic breakfast,” says Lee from their beach home in Oxnard, Calif., “but I don’t remember seeing him. I always liked to tell him that.”

Before long, Lee was going everywhere with Joe, to political events, dinners, even when he transported VIPs. She recalls one trip when Joe drove Pierre Salinger, Kennedy’s press secretary, to Frank Sinatra’s house in Palm Springs. “We all had dinner together,” she says. “Sinatra was funny, really nice and friendly.”

Joe and Lee got married in 1963 and eventually raised their family amid the political clamor of their lives. For the Cerrell children—Steve, Joe Jr. and Sharon—it was a “different” childhood. On any weekday night, strategy sessions or fundraisers filled their home, “often with police and Secret Service out front,” recalls Joe Cerrell Jr., director of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation’s Europe office.

Joe did draw the line, however. “He loved his work and he worked hard,” says Joe’s long-time friend, Bob Meyers, president and COO of the National Press Foundation. “But he loved his family most of all. He and Lee raised three great kids . . . all now wonderful parents in their own right, enabling Joe to happily make the transition into the role of doting grandfather.”



**Joe Cerrell, former prime minister of Italy Carlo Ciampi and former Congressman and NIAF Chairman Emeritus Frank J. Guarini**

(of seven grandchildren), the job I think he always wanted."

Born Joseph R. Cerrella in Queens, N.Y., June 19, 1935, he was the son of Salvatore Cerrella. Sal was the first of Giussepina and Francesco Cerrella's nine children to be born in New York City after they immigrated here from Rossano, in Italy's Calabria region.

Joe got his Italian genes from his father, Sal, who worked as a New York City fireman. Joe got his political genes from his mother, Marion, who worked on campaigns.

In 1940, when Joe was 5, Sal took him to his first game at Yankee Stadium where he saw the great Joe DiMaggio play centerfield. That sealed a life-long love affair Joe had for the Bronx Bombers.

Enrolling Joe at Public School 49 in Queens, in 1941, Sal dropped the "a" from the end of Cerrella, wanting to Americanize the name and protect his son from discrimination against Italian Americans. Joe kept "Cerrell," but his passport displays his pride in the original spelling.

In the mid-50s, Sal and Marion moved the family to Los Angeles. Joe graduated from Los Angeles High School, then from USC where he discovered his political calling. But he never lost touch with New York City. He always rooted for the Yankees, one of his favorite tunes was Sinatra's "New York, New York," and while the accent faded, the New York attitude didn't.

For all of Joe's love of Italy and heritage, he came by his

passion for it later in life. In the mid-'80s, he started researching his ancestry prior to New York City. In 1987, he took a trip with his family to his ancestral hometown, the small dusty Rossano, that changed his life.

At the Rossano's City Hall, Joe found old birth certificates for the Cerrellas. He slipped the local bureaucrats two bottles of good scotch and acquired photocopies of all the old documents, recalls Joe Jr., then 18. "We ended up seeing the family there who had the name 'Cerrella,' exchanging photos, trying to find long lost relatives. That was one of the great trips."

Italy beckoned and Joe went back often. He met the Pope four times—once along with L.A. Supervisor Mike Antonovich, who remembers "We were in awe." Another time, the president of Italy knighted Joe and, on a more recent trip, the town of Rossano appointed him honorary mayor. Once, Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's office called him saying the Prime Minister "wants to know what you're doing tomorrow morning." Joe replied, "Whatever Mr. Berlusconi wants me to do." They went to see Berlusconi's soccer team.

"One thing about Joe, when he focused on something, he really gave his heart and soul to it," says Hal Dash, chairman and CEO of Cerrell Associates, who worked with Joe 33 years. "He really became a born-again Italian. He was like a kid in the candy store."

House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi, a friend and politi-



**Joe Cerrell and Pope John Paul II in the Vatican**

cal ally of Joe's for more than three decades, says it was their mutual "great pride" in their Italian-American heritage that originally brought her and Joe close together. "Joe was not only proud of being an Italian American," she says, "he loved being Italian American."

Joe also loved details. On vacations, he'd so overbook each waking moment that he rarely relaxed. "He would have a full nine-day agenda, just like a political campaign," says Bullock. "That was Joe. That's why people would go to him when planning an event or a campaign."

The detailing went straight to one of Joe's other loves—food. No matter where he was in Italy or the world, Joe knew a place to eat. Wayne Johnson, president of The Wayne Johnson Agency in Sacramento, was amazed when he and his wife travelled with Joe and Lee on a 1,000-mile train trip across the Kalahari. Joe had mapped the restaurants. "It was always more about the company than the food for people fortunate enough to be included on one of Joe's gastronomical forays," he says.

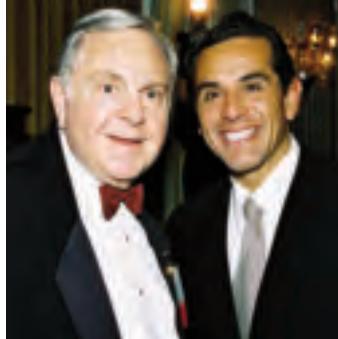
About the same time Joe was discovering his Italian roots, he got involved with the National Italian American Foundation. "They called me and said I had been nominated to be president," Joe said. "I turned down the nomination. They said, 'Fine, you just got elected.'"

In fact, Joe served 16 years as the Foundation's national vice chairman, president, and member of the board of directors. He considered his fundraising skills to be his finest ➤

Joe Cerrell addresses a NIAF Gala



Joe Cerrell and Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa at NIAF's Los Angeles Gala in 2006



Joe Cerrell and then Speaker of the House U.S. Rep. Nancy Pelosi



contribution. And Hal Dash recalls once, on a trip to Italy, reminding Joe not to ask the Pope for a donation to NIAF.

But Joe made so many contributions in so many ways to NIAF—including getting Bill Clinton to attend seven NIAF Awards Galas while he was president.

“His persona and his presence, his personality, everything about him epitomized what NIAF was all about,” says NIAF Chairman Jerry Colangelo, who first met Joe when he signed on to NIAF’s mission. He fondly recalls engaging conversations over dinners or a glass of wine with Joe.

NIAF President Joseph V. Del Raso couldn’t agree more. “We did good things, Italian heritage, scholarships . . . ,” he says of Joe and fellow NIAF board members. “But, at the end of the day, one of the most unintended benefits was the friendships we built with one another. That’s why this was such a great loss to me.”

Or as Nancy Pelosi put it,

“Although he didn’t live *cent’anni*—100 years—he had far more than 100 years worth of love and respect.”

Joe was known for the annual Christmas bash he and Lee threw at the HMS Bounty, a New York City-style joint on Wilshire Boulevard. The highly anticipated event packed in friends, clients, politicians and reporters and others who were lucky enough to make the Cerrell list.

Jumbo shrimp, filet mignon sandwiches and an open bar were the centerpiece. The crowd spanned the political spectrum—left to right, young to old. “The conversations there could not have happened anywhere else,” says Scott Schmidt, the West Hollywood Transportation Commission chairman who has attended since the mid ‘90s.

The party was testament to what Howard Sunkin had observed since knowing Joe 26 years. “It’s amazing how many clients over the years become

Cerrell family friends,” says Sunkin, the L.A. Dodgers’ senior vice president of public affairs. “I think this speaks to who Joe was.”

Invitations to the highly anticipated party were always Cerrell masterpieces of understated humor—one year a fake stock certificate, another year mock Democratic Convention credentials. The invitation to the 2010 party was a 5-by-5 inch booklet titled “Cerrell Field Guide.” It was all about how times change. To make the point, its pages included a photo of a rolodex with the word “Blackberry,” a photo of books with the word “Kindle,” the Yellow Pages with “Google,” etc.

At the booklet’s end were these words: “Lee and Joe invite you to the Last Hurrah! Times may be changing, but good friends are forever, wherever we may be!”

Joe died the day before the Christmas party. The party went on the next evening as a tribute to, as someone once called Joe, “one of the great good guys.” ▲

## Honoring Joe Cerrell

Since Joe Cerrell’s death, several honors have been awarded in his memory.

On May 19, at its West Coast Gala in Santa Monica, Calif., NIAF will pay a special tribute to Joe. The University of Southern California, Joe’s alma mater where he cofounded the Jesse M. Unruh Institute of Politics, has renamed its popular political networking seminar to the “Joseph R. Cerrell Sacramento Seminar.”

For 15 years, as an adjunct professor, Joe taught what he knew best—poli-

tics—at USC. “We wanted to honor his tremendous contributions and his memory,” says Dan Schnur, director of the Jesse M. Unruh Institute of Politics. “We couldn’t think of any more of a fitting tribute to Joe and his legacy than to name the seminar after him.”

Meanwhile, NIAF is at the forefront in supporting a resolution before the Los Angeles City Council to rename the Italian American Museum of Los Angeles after Joe. Over the years, Joe was instrumental in getting the political approval and the



institutional funding needed to renovate and preserve the historic 1908 Italian Hall. Located in downtown Los Angeles, it serves as the only museum in Southern California dedicated to the Italian experience. ▲



Ksenia Rappoport in "Double Hour."

Courtesy of Samuel Goldwyn Films

# Giuseppe Capotondi's "The Double Hour"

## *Draws From a Long Legacy of Film Noir*

By Maria Garcia

Giuseppe Capotondi's debut movie, "La Doppia Ora" ("The Double Hour"), is a love story in the style of American film noir. An atmospheric thriller with a cast that includes Filippo Timi, the star of "Vincere," it is an entertaining and visually stunning movie.

"I was very lucky as a first-time director," Capotondi says, in lightly accented English, during a telephone conversation in January from Barcelona. "It was fun to make."

Timi and his co-star, Russian-born Ksenia Rappoport, were both honored at 2009 Venice Film Festival for their performances in "Double Hour," which will open here in April.

The story centers on Guido, an ex-cop whose wife was murdered, and Sonia, a woman with a past. They meet at a speed-dating session in Turin. Right from the start, it will be apparent to classic movie fans that the couple's romance promises "Maltese Falcon" rather than "Pillow Talk."

Through the plot twists of this skillfully written mystery, Capotondi keeps the audience squarely focused on his protagonists, and the question of whether or not they will seize the second chance that their budding relationship represents. Hope lingers in Guido's willingness to look beyond what he suspects is Sonia's checkered

past, as well as in Sonia's attempts to turn her life around by reuniting with her Slovenian family from which she has long been estranged.

Capotondi was born in Corinaldo, a small village in the Comune di Ancona. He made his way to Milan after high school, and attended college there, earning a degree in philosophy. "It's one of those subjects you take when you don't know what else to do," the filmmaker says.

Attracted to photography early on, Capotondi turned what had been a hobby into a career and became a still photographer. Later, he moved to TV commercials and music videos.

"Nicola Giuliano saw some of my work when he was looking for a director for this story," Capotondi says, referring to one of the producers on "Double Hour." Giuliano previously produced the acclaimed "Il Divo," a movie about Italian prime minister Giulio Andreotti.

The title "Double Hour" refers to the doubling of numbers on a digital clock—for instance, 12:12. Guido jokes with Sonia that such hours are a time for wishes, but in the film they also signal a turn of events.►



Filippo Timi, and Ksenia Rappoport co-star as a troubled couple in Giuseppe Capotondi's "Double Hour." Capotondi won "Young Cinema Award" at Venice Film Festival in 2009 for "Double Hour."

Courtesy of Samuel Goldwyn Films



Giuseppe Capotondi directs actress Ksenia Rappaport in a scene from "Double Hour," filmed mostly in Turin, Italy.

"Double Hour" draws on the idea behind many mystery and horror films that emphasizes a character's public face as opposed to the secret aspects of their personality.

"I think all of us are double," Capotondi says. "We hide a side that is not so presentable to society. We cannot show the whole of our personalities unless we want to be . . . on our own. I think that's why doubles are so compelling."

In the movie, the union of Guido and Sonia, who may be on opposite sides of the law, represents an unusual acceptance of the "Other," a "doubling" that involves great risk but also great promise. In one sense, the entire film moves from what Capotondi calls the "presentable" side, the side the characters expose during speed-dating, to the parts of their personalities they have shared with no one else.

"Yes, at first they are afraid," the director says, "but the struggle is also not being able to forgive yourself. Sonia is unable to forgive herself for what she's done in the past. She could easily have told Guido the truth, rather

than hide what she's done."

Early in the film, Guido and Sonia are ambushed by burglars in a home where Guido monitors the security equipment. Both are injured, Sonia more seriously than Guido. As she lies unconscious in the hospital, Guido is compelled to gauge his commitment to her. "He must choose life again because he has found a woman that he can love," Capotondi observes.

Often in a stylish film like "Double Hour," the unveiling of the mystery, or the action of the thriller, overrides the audience's connection to the characters. It's why Capotondi shot half of the movie in extreme close-up on the faces of Guido and Sonia. "I wanted to see if I could trust her and if I could believe her," he says. "There was a certain challenge there for me."

If Capotondi believed Sonia was genuinely attracted to Guido, then the audience would, too. "Guido as well," the director says. "He looked into her eyes and he was so close to her in that first scene. For the audience, it was like being there with them."

That sort of intimacy, the hallmark of good drama, is even

more important in a thriller where the audience must believe that someone is telling the truth.

In "The Maltese Falcon," Sam Spade (Humphrey Bogart) is having an affair with his partner's wife. When the partner is killed, he loses interest in the wife, and falls for Brigid (Mary Astor), a pathological liar who will do anything to get her hands on the falcon. That moral ambiguity—the disingenuous detective and the classy bad gal—is vintage film noir.

"There is a dark lady you really want to trust in those old films," Capotondi muses. "She's not good but neither is the hero."

In "Double Hour," Guido does what Spade cannot—he loves Sonia unconditionally. "The film is about something that happens to everyone," Capotondi explains, "which is not being able to open yourself up or not being able to trust yourself or the 'Other.' That's a love story." ▲

*Maria Garcia is a New York City based freelance writer and a frequent contributor to Ambassador. Her reviews and feature articles also appear regularly in Film Journal International and Cineaste.*

# On Thinner Ice

**NHL All-Star Mike Modano Skates into the Twilight of His Career with Plenty of Puck**

By Wayne Randazzo

One of the greatest American-born skaters of all-time could be in his final season on the ice. Mike Modano, the former number one overall draft pick of the Minnesota North Stars in 1988, was skating along with the Detroit Red Wings this season after his long-time ties with the North Stars (since 1993 the Dallas Stars) were cut last summer.

Unfortunately for Modano, a freak accident in November may sideline him until the playoffs. He severed a tendon and suffered nerve damage in his right hand after a skate cut his wrist.

"If there's a silver lining, it's that it happened in November, but when you're feeling good and healthy, you just want to continue going and playing," Modano says. "Now it's just a matter of building up the strength again."

Modano doesn't expect to lose any long-term functionality to the wrist or hand. He's hopeful for a March return. He considered not even playing this season. After being told that he wouldn't be returning to the Stars, the only franchise he's ever known, retirement didn't seem that far away.

At 40, Modano has played well past most hockey players, but he's never been like most hockey players. He was only the second American to be drafted with the first overall pick after Brian Lawton turned the trick in 1983. Only four men have done so since.

Modano is also the all-time goal-scoring and points leader among American-born players and the last active NHL player to have suited up for the North Stars, a team that ceased to exist after moving to Dallas and becoming the Stars following the 1992-93 season.

A native of Livonia, Mich., Modano had three choices last offseason—to return to

Minnesota with the NHL Wild, retire, or go home to play for the Red Wings. When Modano signed with Detroit, head coach Mike Babcock envisioned him as the center of his third line with Dan Cleary and Jiri Hudler. Babcock's dreams turned into a reality almost as soon as Modano

point lead over Nashville and a 10-point advantage over the defending champions in Chicago. Detroit currently has the second-best record in the Western Conference with Dallas in third.

If both squads continue to march toward the postseason, the potential for Modano to face the



Mike Modano in 2006 during his Dallas Stars days on the ice against his current team, the Detroit Red Wings. NIAF honored Modano at its 2010 Texas Gala.

touched the ice. On just his second shift of the first period in his first game, Modano took a pass from Cleary and slid a wrister past Anaheim goalie Jonas Hiller for his first goal with the Red Wings.

Modano didn't play particularly well after that. It took him several games to net his second goal. But just before the injury, his game began to improve.

"I was physically feeling great at the time," Modano says. "I was getting much more comfortable in the situation here, and I was glad to have an opportunity to play."

Since Modano's absence, the Red Wings have begun to pull away in the NHL's Central Division, where they hold a seven-

point lead over Nashville and a 10-point advantage over the defending champions in Chicago. Detroit currently has the second-best record in the Western Conference with Dallas in third.

"It's been tough to just sit and watch," Modano says. "The process of healing can be long and drawn out, but I can't wait to get back out there." ▲

Wayne Randazzo is the editor of *Red, White & Green*, the official publication of the National Italian American Sports Hall of Fame. He's also the play-by-play voice of the AA Mobile BayBears Baseball Club and a freelance sports anchor for WGN Radio in Chicago.



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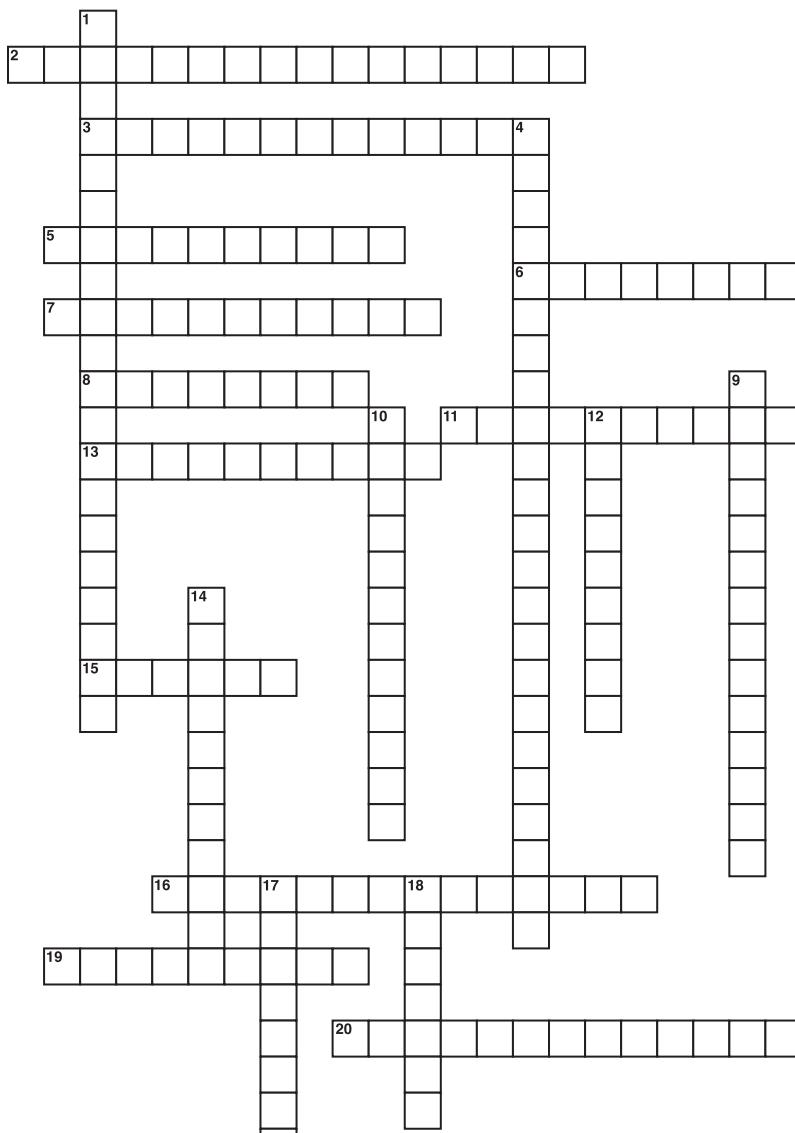


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# Italian Independence and the Republic

By Leon J. Radomile



## Solution

Across	1 The Roman Question	2 The Risorgimento	3 The Risorgimento	4 Festa della Repubblica	5 Repubblica	6 Enrico Robert De Nicola	7 Il Tricolore	8 Repubblica	9 Auspicio Empre	10 Risorgimento	11 President George W. Bush	12 Giuseppe Garibaldi	13 Pope Pius IX	14 Kingdom of the Two Sicilies	15 Count Camillo Benso Cavour	16 Victor Emmanuel II	17 The Leopard	18 Giuseppe Mazzini	19 Alcide De Gasperi	20 Prime Minister
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## Down

- What have Italians celebrated every June 2nd since 1946?
- Name of the military campaign led by the revolutionary general Giuseppe Garibaldi in 1860.
- Who did Italy battle against in the third Independence War, in alliance with the Kingdom of Prussia?
- The name for this political movement that started in Italy in 1831. The movement advocated the ideas of constitutional reform, with its objective being the liberation and unification of Italy.
- Regarded as the George Washington of Italy, he led 1,000 volunteers, known as the Red Shirts, in the conquest of Sicily, which led to the establishment of the Kingdom of Italy.
- It was the largest and wealthiest of the Italian states before Italian unification.
- Written by Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa, it chronicled the changes in Sicilian life and society during the Risorgimento. An all-time best seller in Italy, it is considered one of the most important novels in modern Italian literature.
- One of the key figures in the Italian independence movement, he founded the patriotic group, Giovine Italia.

## Across

- Term used to describe the political dispute between the Italian Government and the Vatican from 1861 to 1929.
- Translate Il Risorgimento to English.
- The Kingdom of Italy was abolished by this political process in 1946.
- Born in Naples on November 9, 1877, he became Italy's first president on July 1, 1946.
- The flag of Italy is often referred to in this Italian language term.
- This replaced the Kingdom of Italy in 1946.
- What American president said the following: "In celebrating Italian Independence Day, we commemorate the freedoms our countries hold dear, and we honor the generations of Italian Americans who came to our shores seeking opportunity. They have helped to shape our great nation and influence American life for the better. By the authority vested in me by the Constitution of the United States, do hereby proclaim June 2nd as Italian Independence Day. I call upon all Americans to observe this day by celebrating the contributions of Italians and Italian Americans to our Nation."
- The last pope to rule as the sovereign of the Papal States, which were absorbed into the newly formed Kingdom of Italy.
- What Italian statesman and member of the nobility was primarily responsible for creating the United Kingdom of Italy in 1861.
- First king of a united Italy (1861-78), he worked to free Italy from foreign control and became a central figure in the movement for Italian unification.
- He was the Republic of Italy's first prime minister and founder of the Christian Democratic Party. He was also a founding father of the European Union along with German Konrad Adenauer and Frenchman Robert Schuman.
- Upon the death of Cavour, Bettino Ricasoli became the second man to hold this office in the newly formed Kingdom of Italy on June 6, 1861.

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