



Italian Historical Society of America Newsletter

MAY 2020

BY JANICE THERESE MANCUSO

VOLUME 16, NUMBER 5

Tutto Italiano **Benvenuto a *Tutto Italiano***

Shared by three regions – Veneto, Lombardia, and Trentino Alto-Adige – and the largest lake in Italy, [Lake Garda](#) extends about thirty miles south from the foothills of the Dolomites. Shaped like an inverted ax, the narrow northern section of the lake [funnels through sloping mountainsides and cliffside peaks](#) for about twenty miles before collecting into a basin at its southern end. Along its banks, towns are strung like jewels on a necklace, each radiating with its own charm.

Of the lake's five islands, [Isola del Garda](#) is the largest. Located near the southwestern shore of the lake, it was chosen as the site of a Franciscan hermitage in the early thirteenth century by St. Francis of Assisi. Expanding on the refuge, a convent and monastery were built and the island was an active religious community until the late seventeenth century. In the late eighteenth century, Napoleon – in command of the Army of Italy in its battle against Austria – took control of the island and it was later sold to a private owner.

Ownership of the island passed through several counts and dukes, and in the early 1800s, the monastery was reconstructed into a villa. By the end of the 1800s, new owners had a palace – in the style of Venetian Gothic – built on the grounds of the old villa, and added a [park](#) and [formal gardens](#). Today, the island is owned by descendants of Count Alessandro Cavazza. The island offers guided tours and is a wedding venue, but is currently closed.

On the south shore of Lake Garda, the [narrow peninsula of Sirmione](#) juts two miles into the water; at its tip are the [ruins of a Roman villa](#), claimed to be the largest in northern Italy. Now an archeological park and recognized for its thermal waters, the area was also the location of a villa either owned by the family of the Roman poet Gaius Valerius Catullus (c 84-c.54 BCE) or where Catullus stayed as a guest. The ruins are known as the [Grotte di Catullo](#).

Less than one-half mile south of the ruins is [Rocca Scaligera](#), a castle built during the thirteenth century, commissioned by [Mastino I della Scala](#) (website in Italian), a member of the ruling family of Verona and surrounding towns from the mid-1200s to the late 1300s. In 1405, Sirmione became part of the Venetian Republic. The [castle was built on a thin strip of the peninsula](#), surrounded by the lake that functions as a moat.

Across the lake, about six miles southeast of Sirmione, in the town of Castelnuovo del Garda, is [Gardaland Resort](#), the largest theme park in Italy. Not accessible by water – a little over 12 miles by car from Sirmione – the park, opened in 1975, includes hotels, themed hotels, an aquarium, and the recently constructed [LEGOLAND® Water Park, the first one in Europe](#). (A LEGOLAND® Water Park has been rescheduled to open in Goshen, New York [70 miles northwest of NYC] in 2021.)

The rides at Gardaland are labeled Fantasy, Adventure, and Adrenaline – Oblivion The Black Hole, Raptor, and Blue Tornado. Some of the themed restaurants include a “marine-inspired decor” tavern built on a bridge with a water view; an “Arabian-style architecture” eating hall; a pub featuring “medieval music and costumes;” and an

immersion “in ancient Egypt” dining among “impressive columns and walls lined with hieroglyphs.” In 2005, Gardaland Resort was purchased by Merlin Entertainment, based in England. The park is currently closed.

[Isola del Garda \[Borghese Cavazza\]](#) (YouTube Video)

[Comune di Sirmione](#) (In Italian)

[Sirmione](#) (YouTube Video)

[Scaliger Castle, Sirmione](#)

[Gardaland Blue Tornado](#) (YouTube Video)

Views from Venice

At [La Venessiana](#), Iris Loredana provides a look into the Venetian neighborhoods that surround her. She recently wrote [Living with Corona: How is Venice doing?](#) For more from Iris about Venice, read my article, [A Reset for a City, a Country and the World](#) on *La Gazzetta Italiana*.

Food and travel blogger [Monica Cesarato](#) started writing about Venice in 2009, to share her knowledge and love for her city. She is also a [culinary instructor](#) specializing in [themed cooking classes](#) using local in-season ingredients. In March, Monica started “[Venice Meets...](#),” a 30-minute live show on Instagram featuring interviews with “writers, journalists, artisans, bloggers and much more.” Some prior shows are available on [her YouTube channel](#).

Experience Venice with [Luisella Romeo](#), a certified tour guide. For 20 years, Luisella has been [offering guided tours](#) focusing on personalization and the authentic [Venice experience](#). She recently added [virtual tours](#) and was interviewed about [the future of tourism in Venice](#) by *Italy Magazine*.

Thank you, [JoAnn](#), for sharing. [Venice Artisans](#).

Virtual Museum Tours

America

“[The Garibaldi Meucci Museum](#) was the home of Antonio Meucci, the true inventor of the telephone, and a refuge to Giuseppe Garibaldi, the legendary hero who championed the unification of Italy.” It is located on Staten Island. [Virtual Tour](#) (Scroll down).

The [Italian American Museum of Los Angeles](#) (IAMLA) focuses on “the Southern California Italian American experience with an emphasis on Los Angeles.”

[Fantasy World: Italian Americans in Animation](#)

[St Joseph's Tables: Expressions of Devotion, Charity and Abundance](#) (YouTube Video)

Italy

[Museo del Novecento](#), Milan; Twentieth Century Art

[Uffizi](#), Florence; The Hall of the Dynasties and the Galleries of Sixteenth-Century Venetian Painting

[Vatican](#), Rome ; Museums, Sistine Chapel, Raphael’s Room, and more.

[6 Beautiful Italian Museums to Visit for Free Online](#)

From the Italian American Press

The Italian American Press offers a great selection of books – culture, history, memoirs, art, family, food, the supernatural, the natural beauty of Italy, and more – for every interest. Help preserve Italian American heritage and history. Support authors of

Italian heritage who write about Italian American and Italian culture and let them know you found their books on the Italian American Press.

The Quest

Raphael Ferraro founded the Italian American Press in 2001. He had been writing for years and wanted to establish a website to help promote authors of Italian heritage and books about Italian-related topics. Like many of the authors listed on the Italian American Press, Ralph has numerous interests and professions – he was a high school teacher, supervisor of K-12 health education curriculums, created and directed a Community Crises Program for the schools, and, after retiring, he taught adult workshops and seminars on stress-management, self-actualization, creative writing, and spiritual healing through a local college.

In the early 1980s, when coping with stress was gaining a more holistic approach, Ralph wrote *The Quest: Maximizing Health and Wellness Through Spiritual Healing*. The step-by-step program provided a series of activities to clear thoughts for a healthier mindset. The various techniques motivate the reader – at their own pace and convenience – through the process of seeking guidance and reassurance through difficult times.

The Quest was recently revised to appeal to the diversified audience of 2020, with updates to the mid-twentieth century authors and healers, encompassing a variety of beliefs, and adding contemplative images to accompany the self-guided program.

Available as a free download, *The Quest* is offered compliments of Ralph and the Italian American Press in collaboration with Rich DiSilvio, DV Books; *La Gazzetta Italiana*; and the Italian Historical Society of America.

Download *The Quest: Maximizing Health and Wellness Through Spiritual Healing* (PDF)

Italian American Press: www.italianamericanpress.com/

Rich DiSilvio, DV Books: dvbooks.net/thequest.htm

La Gazzetta Italiana: <https://www.lagazzettaitaliana.com/>

Italian Historical Society of America: <http://www.italianhistorical.org/>

Make Italian American Movies

Almost any book listed on the Italian American Press would make a wonderful movie. Here are nine from IAP featured authors (including me) and potential genres. To read a synopsis and for more information, go to [Make Italian American Movies](#) on the IAP. If you are on Twitter, Instagram, or other social media, please share. Reach out to actors, filmmakers, directors, and producers.

Make It A Movie

A Camp Without Walls by Dr. Maria Lombardo

Royanna: An Extraterrestrial Affair by Raphael Ferraro

The Ghosts of the Garfagnana: Seven Strange Stories from Haunted Tuscany by Paul Salsini

Out of Rushmore's Shadow: The Luigi Del Bianco Story by Lou Del Bianco

Coal War in the Mahoning Valley by Joe Tucciarone and Ben Lariccia

Not for Self: A Sicilian Life and Death in Marion by Joseph L. Cacibauda

Vina, A Brooklyn Memoir by Joseph C. Polacco

The Seven Golden Apples by Robert Cirillo

Con Amore by Janice Therese Mancuso

Italian American Heritage Project

The groups opposing Columbus Day have an organized agenda to eliminate it from America; Italian Americans do not have an organized defense. The statements of truth and facts posted on so many Italian American websites are not working. Italian Americans need a nationwide program to battle the campaign to abolish Columbus Day or it will be lost; even though Indigenous People already have a designated day, and Native Americans have a day and a month to celebrate their culture.

