



# Italian Historical Society of America

## Newsletter

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BY JANICE THERESE MANCUSO

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

Five hundred years ago, this past April, the Renaissance artist [Raphael](#) died. Born in Urbino (region of Le Marche), he learned the basics of painting from his father – Giovanni Santi, a painter in the court of the Duke of Urbino – and at 11 years old (in 1494), he participated in the operation of the studio after his father died. Raphael lost his mother three years earlier, and was under the guidance of an uncle and his stepmother.

During the early 1500s, Raphael moved to Florence and began an apprenticeship with [Pietro Perugino](#), an accomplished painter. Some note that Raphael's father may have secured the arrangement before he died. In Florence, Raphael met [Fra Bartolommeo](#) and each influenced the other's painting style. It's also noted that Raphael worked with [Timoteo Viti](#), another aspiring artist of the time.

At the invitation of Pope Julius II, Raphael moved to Rome in 1508, where he was commissioned to paint the frescos in the pope's apartment in the Vatican. (At the same time, the pope had commissioned Michelangelo to paint the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.) In Rome, Raphael also received commissions for architectural designs, altarpieces, and tapestries from other notables, and faced competitive opposition from Michelangelo. Still, he focused on his assignments and built one of the largest workshops ever owned.

The four rooms of the pope's apartment, known as the [Stanze de Raffaello](#), were completed by Raphael's workshop after his death in 1520, at 37. Raphael's accomplishments place him among the Masters – especially with Leonardo da Vinci (31 years older) and Michelangelo (eight years older). His painting [The School of Athens](#) (in the first room painted) with a theme of philosophy was inspired by da Vinci and da Vinci's face was used to depict Plato.

This year, art institutes around the world had planned [celebratory events of Raphael's works](#); but the corona virus curtailed the programs. Among the major exhibits, The National Gallery in London has postponed its exhibit, "[one of the first ever to explore Raphael's complete career](#)," to 2022. Another major exhibit, *Raphael and His Circle* at the National Gallery of Art in Washing D.C., became [available online as a virtual tour](#).

[The Art Story: Raphael](#)

[Raphael: Paintings and Biography](#)

[The School of Athens Sketch by Raphael](#)

[The Story Behind Raphael's Masterpiece 'The School of Athens'](#)

[Raphael's Artwork](#)

[Biography, Exhibits, and Artwork](#)

## 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.

Ralph Ferraro, founder of the Italian American Press, recently shared the news that his daughter, Kristen Anne Ferraro, produced and stars in [A Deadly Legend](#), a thriller about “a mythical Stonehenge of America.” In an [interview on The National Organization of Italian Americans in Film and Television](#), Kristen said, “It’s really important to me that I mention that I’m a first generation Italian American. My dad is from Italy and he came to the U.S. through Ellis Island with his mom when he was three years old. I’m very proud of my heritage. My father is also creative and it’s something that he has inspired in me my entire life from the day I was born and he is still encouraging it. I just want to give him some credit because he’s a writer and a book collector also. He actually created and ran the [Italian American Press](#) to promote Italian American authors. He’s in his late 80’s now and transitioned it over to another Italian American author who is now running it.”

### Italian American Heritage Project

Columbus Day and Columbus statues linger in jeopardy. Some recent articles:

Source: [Italian American ONE VOICE Coalition Responding to “An Open Letter to the Nutley Board of Commissioners, Nutley UNICO, & Nutley - Belleville Columbus Day Parade Committee”](#) By Rafael Ortiz; August 14, 2020 (Rafael’s book, [Christopher Columbus The Hero](#), is listed on the Italian American Press.)

[Christopher Columbus: American Hero](#) (Crisis Magazine, August 13, 2020)

[Where Next, Columbus? Fate of Temporarily Removed Statues in Question](#) (wttw news [Chicago]; July 27, 2020) *Thanks, Bill.*

Last month, I responded to several questions sent by journalist Roberto Zanni of *La Gente d'Italia*, “a newspaper for Italians who live abroad.” His questions:

- 1) Should Columbus continue to be the symbol of Italian-Americans or must he be replaced?
- 2) Why are US institutions no longer defending Italian-Americans?
- 3) What should Italian-Americans do and what initiatives is your organization carrying out?

My reply:

1) Christopher Columbus is a symbol of Italian American culture. He represents an icon that the beleaguered Italian immigrants were able to claim as their own; and as it became a nation, America also claimed Columbus as a symbol of the American spirit of perseverance and individuality. In the late 1900s, a movement of personal ideology began to take hold, spreading misinformation about Columbus through the education system in schools and universities. Through social media, the falsehoods have amplified. At the onset, the Italian American community did not address the misrepresentations of Columbus, and now we are dealing with the consequences.

2) Sadly, Italian Americans receive little respect from the media. This goes back to the treatment of the waves of Italian immigrants who journeyed to America mostly during the turn of the twentieth century. The immigrants faced massive discrimination and, through the years, were stereotyped as criminals or ignorant fools. Movie and television shows continued the typecasting.

3) Education based on historical fact is the key. The significance of Italian immigrants’ and Italian Americans’ achievements and contributions to America has been relentlessly overlooked, as has the history of Italian immigrants’ transformations to

Italian Americans. In what has been a call for reeducation, the Italian American community needs to be included in this effort to emphasize the importance of our history, heritage, and culture.

In 2007, I founded [Thirty-One Days of Italians](#), to educate others about the contributions that those of Italian heritage have made to America. In 2018, I founded the Italian American Heritage Project, <http://italamerheritage.com>, providing educational resources about Italian American history, heritage, and culture. Lesson plans about the letters Columbus wrote after his first voyage may be accessed here, [http://italamerheritage.com/lesson\\_plans.htm](http://italamerheritage.com/lesson_plans.htm).

The article was published August 8th in Italian.

[Cristoforo Colombo? È la perseveranza La nostra colpa? Non ci facciamo sentire. Viaggio-inchiesta tra le organizzazioni italo-americane negli Stati Uniti](#)  
(Christopher Columbus? Is Perseverance Our Fault? We do not make ourselves heard. Journey-inquiry among Italian-American organizations in the United States)

My Reply:

[I media non ci rispettano, sempre stato così](#)

(The media don't respect us, that's always been the case)

The groups opposing Columbus Day have an organized agenda to eliminate it from America. 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.

Indigenous Peoples Day – August 9

Native American Month – November

Native American Heritage Day – Friday after Thanksgiving

Visit the [IAHP website](#) to read my articles, learn about the lesson plans, see the resources I've used, and support my work. Donate for a cause – preserving Italian heritage and Italian American history and culture through education. [All donations are tax-deductible.](#)

### **Thirty-One Days of Italians**

In 2007, Thirty-One Days of Italians was created to celebrate each day in October – Italian American Heritage Month – by honoring one person of Italian heritage who has significantly contributed to America.

The first day in October honors the Italian immigrant and the last day is set aside to honor someone not on the List. Honorary Members are on the List every year. In alphabetical order, they are Father Pietro Bandini, Constantino Brumidi, Mother Francis Cabrini, Enrico Caruso, Christopher Columbus, Enrico Fermi, Amadeo Pietro Giannini, Guglielmo Marconi, Filippo Mazzei, Antonio Meucci, Maria Montessori, Andrea Palladio, Antonio Pasin, Arturo Toscanini, and Amerigo Vespucci.

Other names are rotated, giving everyone on Thirty-One Days of Italians a chance to have their day. The [2020-21 List](#) includes (in alphabetical order) Mario Andretti, Giacomo Costantino Beltrami, Charles J. Bonaparte, Frank Capra, Giovanni da Verrazzano, Luigi Del Bianco, Daniela Gioseffi, Grucci Family, Jacuzzi Family, Mario Lanza, Robert Mondavi, Amedeo Obici, Sabato Rodia, and Giovanni Schiavo.

### **Museum Exhibits**

[Virtual Tours of Italian Museums](#) (Milan City Guide)

[Studiolo from the Ducal Palace in Gubbio, ca. 1478–82](#) (The Met, New York City)





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