



# Italian Historical Society of America Newsletter

MARCH 2022

BY JANICE THERESE MANCUSO

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

Less than 100 feet from the north bank of the [Arno River](#) – in Florence's Piazza del Mercato Nuovo – a bronze sculpture of a wild boar beckons those seeking good luck. The original statue, cast by Pietro Tacca in the 1630s during the reign of the [Medici family](#), is on permanent display in the [Bardini Museum](#).

Tacca was known for his bronze statues, and it was common at the time for small figurines to be given as gifts; but Tacca also created life-size pieces. The statue of the boar, *Il Porcellino*, was inspired by a statue carved from marble during the Hellenistic period (323 to around 31 BC).

The boar is said to be a symbol of Florence, and it's noted that the statue was commissioned by Ferdinand II de' Medici. According to numerous sources, the statue was created for [Boboli Gardens](#), but was placed in the market square in 1640. In 1998, the statue was moved to the Bandini and replaced with a replica.

Viewing the original statue requires a short trip across the Arno. By car is quicker and may be more convenient, but [Ponte Vecchio](#) (Old Bridge) offers an historic option. First documented at the turn of the second century, some sources suggest a bridge may have been built at that location by the Romans; and one source refers to "[the involvement of the Dominican friars](#)." It is acknowledged as "the oldest bridge in Florence," and its distinguishing feature is the merchant shops that line the bridge.

Placing *Il Porcellino* in the market attracted the attention of merchants and shoppers, and over the years, the statue became a symbol of good luck. Coins were inserted in the boar's open mouth and its protruding nose was rubbed to complete the request. The legend of the boar traveled with its visitors, and today replicas of the statue are found throughout the world, some with their nose rubbed to a shine.  
(Thanks, Mary.)

[Ponte Vecchio - History of Oldest Bridge in Florence](#)

[Pietro Tacca](#)

[Scientist of the Day - Pietro Tacca](#)

[Take an Afternoon to Enjoy the Bardini Museum](#)

[Florence's Porcellino Fountain](#)

[Il Porcellino: Florence, Italy](#)

[The "Fontana del Porcellino": Superstitions Rituals and Traditions](#)

[Il Porcellino di Firenze](#) (In Italian – several pictures of statue in various locations)

**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.

Lady Gaga was overlooked for an Oscar this year. Could Royanna be her Oscar-winning role?

### **Featured Book for Make It A Movie**

[\*Royanna An Extra Terrestrial Affair\*](#) by Raphael Ferraro

Mystery, adventure, and a touch of romance in this science fiction tale about an encounter between a human and an alien. From the Gateway of the Sun – an ancient archaeological site in Bolivia – to upstate New York near Lake Ontario – where Mormon prophet Joseph Smith saw the angel Maroni – this science fiction adventure blends the past, present, and future through ancient religions and future prophecy. Leading roles: Jon Bon Jovi, Lady Gaga (A perfect part for her!)

### **Italian American Heritage Project**

[NH Bill to Keep Columbus Day, Observe Indigenous Peoples' Day in August Draws Opposition](#)

(Valley News [NH]; February 10, 2022)

A Republican-backed bill to preserve Columbus Day and have New Hampshire celebrate Indigenous Peoples' Day in August drew opposition at a public hearing this week, in a reprise of a fight last legislative session when Abenaki leaders spoke against the August date.

Rep. Jess Edwards, an Auburn Republican, who is a co-sponsor of HB 1173, favored the August date, which would correspond with the United Nations International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples. He presented the August date as a compromise and a way of ending what he called the "intersectional wars."

Asma Elhuni, an activist who works with the nonprofit Rights and Democracy, said replacing Columbus Day is an important expression of the state's values. Elhuni is also a resident of Concord, which recently opted to replace Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples' Day. She opposed HB 1173, along with 68 people who signed in remotely. Four people logged support of the bill. "We can't be honoring violence," Elhuni said.

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Keep your Italian heritage alive. An excellent source for learning about Italian American culture and heritage is a museum specifically established to focus on the Italian American experience. Many have virtual exhibits and tours available on their websites. [List of Italian American Museums](#).

Talk with your children (no matter what age), grandchildren, other family members, friends, and educators. Tell them about the significant contributions people of Italian heritage have made to America ... and the world. [List of more than 70 contributors on Thirty-One Days of Italians](#).

Learn about Columbus. It's difficult to correct over 30 years of misinformation, and the rapid spread through digital sources is disheartening. In 2018, the Italian American Heritage Project was established to provide educational resources about Italian American history, heritage, and culture. The website also addresses the Columbus Controversy by providing facts about Columbus, how the controversy started, and why it continues. Read [What is the Truth About Columbus?](#) To understand how Columbus became an important part of American history, read [Christopher Columbus: When Did the Hero Become a Villain?](#) (Some links are no longer active.)

[Lesson plans developed from the letters Columbus wrote after his first voyage.](#)

The groups opposing Columbus Day have an organized agenda to eliminate it from America ([Read here](#)). The statements of truth and facts posted on Italian American websites are not working. Columbus Day has lost much of its relevance in American history. 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](#).

### Italian American News

[Finding Culture in Art](#) (La Gazzetta Italiana; March 2022)

[More Graduate Italian-American Studies to Bridge the Gap of Our Cultural Knowledge](#) (La Voce di New York; March 4, 2022)

[Rock Icon Dion Embraces the Blues](#) (Fra Noi; February 22, 2022)

[Garlic Gulch, Seattle's Version of Little Italy](#) (L'Italo Americano; February 4, 2022)

### News about Italy

[Italy's ITA Airways Expands To Boston And Miami](#) (simpleflying; March 5, 2022)

[The Iconic Orient Express Returns To Italy In 2023](#) (italicmag; March 4, 2022)

[How is Italy Responding to the Ukraine Refugee Crisis?](#) (thelocal.it; March 4, 2022)

[How War in Ukraine Will Impact on Italian Food and Beverage](#) (italiafood.net; February 25, 2022)

[Italy Displays Michelangelo's Three Pietà Sculptures Together for First Time](#) (wantedinrome; February 23, 2022) More: [Visiting the Vatican Museums](#)

[Trends Spotted at the Winter Fancy Food Show](#) (italianfood.net; February 11, 2022)

*Buon anno, buon tutto, buona vita,*  
Janice

Janice Therese Mancuso

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Founder, [Thirty-One Days of Italians](#)

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**Notice About Links:** On the date of publication, the links in this newsletter were current. In older newsletters, some links may be inactive if the URL has changed or is no longer available.

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