



# Italian Historical Society of America Newsletter

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

In 1961, a Special Aerobatic Unit, the 313th Aerobatic Training Group, was established by the Italian Air Force to coordinate its air exhibitions. Before 1961, aerobatic teams were assigned to different squadrons, with the Prancing Horse team first established in 1952. From 1953 to 1960, the teams were reassigned and renamed, but to better utilize the pilots and aircraft, the Italian Air Force organized its aerobatic unit into a separate division. The first six pilots were part of the Prancing Horse team, which is reflected in the team's call sign, Pony.

Although smoke systems had been used prior to 1961, the process was reworked, and in 1962, the colors of the Italian flag – as red, white, and green arrows – were added to the fuselage. The three colors and sharp angled images identified the team as [Frecce Tricolori](#), Tricolor Arrows.

Today the MB.339 PAN jets – manufactured in Italy – of Frecce Tricolori are stationed at the [Rivolto Air Base](#) in the northeast region of Friuli Venezia Giulia. Presently, the team includes the Commander, Lieutenant Colonel Massimiliano Salvatore, and ten other pilots. The Commander (Pony O) does not fly with the team, instead supervising from the ground, providing technical and safety instructions. Lieutenant Colonel Salvatore was promoted to Commander last November, after the previous Commander was reassigned. "[During a 'Frecce Tricolori' change of command](#), the team performs an 'in-flight handover' where the previous commander breaks away from the formation, leaving the new commander in charge."

In their air shows, the performances begin with each of the ten jets emitting a plume of smoke – again, signifying the colors of the Italian flag – before take-off. Pony 1 through Pony 9 are the pilots who fly in formation, often splitting into two groups; Pony 10 is the solo pilot. Pony 1 is the team leader, guiding the pilots through their maneuvers; and Pony 10 performs independently, sometimes weaving through the formation, but mostly flying solo entertaining audiences with roll-overs, loops, and swirls, as the team regroups to perform its next maneuver.

Although Frecce Tricolori is acclaimed throughout the world for its incredible air shows, the high-risk performances have been the cause of around 30 accidents, more than half fatal. The second-largest [deadliest air show was at Ramstein Air Base](#) in Germany in 1988. While creating its pierced heart maneuver, Pony 10, the sole pilot, collided with Pony 2, causing debris to smash into Pony 1. All three planes fell to the ground and burst into flames, injuring hundreds and resulting in 70 deaths.

Most recently, last year, while practicing for an air show, [Pony 4 lost control of his jet](#). He safely ejected before the jet crashed, but flying debris hit a vehicle and caused the death of a five-year-old girl. [View this analysis of Frecce Tricolori and the accident](#).

Late last year, "[Italian Air Force Chief of Staff Luca Goretti announced](#)" a Frecce Tricolori North American tour in 2024. In late June, the team was in Canada and will be performing flyovers and in air shows through July and August in Canada and in the United States. Around 30 events have been scheduled. In the States, air shows are

currently scheduled in California, Wisconsin, Illinois, New York, Virginia, and Maryland. [Upcoming air show dates and locations](#).

From its aerobatic team to a sea vessel, Italy has the distinction of being the best. Acclaimed as “the most beautiful ship in the world,” by a seaman of the USS Independence in 1962, the Amerigo Vespucci – launched in 1931 – is a training ship built by the [Italian Navy](#) for its Naval Academy students. “It was considered that the best impact with the marine environment was to live aboard a sail ship, which requires the widest knowledge of the natural elements.”

Last July, the Amerigo Vespucci left Genoa for a world tour – the first in 20 years – to visit more than 30 ports on five continents. “[Amerigo Vespucci carries out mainly two kinds of activity](#): training campaigns for Naval Academy cadets and showing-the-flag in support of national diplomacy.”

On July 3rd, the ship docked in Los Angeles. “[Already an ambassador of Made in Italy around the world](#), accompanying this tour is *Villaggio Italia*, the multi-year Traveling World Exhibition of Italian excellence, which will join the Vespucci for seven more stops.” While docked in Los Angeles, Frece Tricolori performed several air shows, [flying over the Vespucci](#).

On July 8th, the Amerigo Vespucci set sail for Honolulu. The remaining tour includes Tokyo, Australia, Singapore, Mumbai, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia, returning to Italy in March 2025.

### **Special Event**

The [Italian Cultural Society](#) in Carmichael, California (Sacramento County) is an official sponsor of Frece Tricolori performing at the Air Show at Mather Air Field on July 13th and 14th. From the newsletter: “This is a first for Sacramento. They will be greeted on arrival by the Italian Cultural Society folk dancers, flanked by Italian cars and motorcycles. Their arrival will be televised nationally.”

[This is Flight: Frece Tricolori](#)

[Italian Air Force Precision Team Flies over Vegas Strip, Headed to Los Angeles Area](#)

[Frece Tricolori to Pay a Rare Visit to Chicago](#)

[Frece Tricolori Aerobatic Team from Italian Air Force to Participate at EAA AirVenture Oshkosh 2024](#)

[Italy's Frece Tricolori: Italian Daredevils of the Skies](#) (2013)

[Frece Tricolori RIAT 2022 Italian Air Force World's No.1 Aerobatic Team](#) [Royal International Air Tattoo, Gloucestershire, England] (YouTube Video)

[Top 5 World's Best Aerobatic Display Teams](#) (YouTube Video)

[Our Exclusive Visit to the Queen of the Seas, the Amerigo Vespucci Training Ship](#) (2024)

[Vespucci: The World Tour of the Italian Navy's Sailing Ship, Ambassador of Made in Italy, Departs from Genoa](#) (In Italian. Scroll down for video.)

[Amerigo Vespucci: History of the Most Beautiful Ship in the World](#)

[Amerigo Vespucci: The Secrets of the Most Beautiful Ship in the World](#)

[Amerigo Vespucci: Onboard Tour](#) (YouTube Video)

**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. *NOTE: Technical issues are affecting some images on the IAP website. They will be resolved as quickly as possible.*

### **New on the Italian American Press**

*Brooklyn Joe and Sal: Two Bensonhurst Boys* by Joseph C. Polacco

In acknowledging *The Boys of Bensonhurst* written by Salvatore La Puma and published in 1987, Joe Polacco recounts stories of his childhood and beyond in the same Brooklyn neighborhood. With his roots firmly planted in Bensonhurst, Joe writes “Mr. La Puma’s stories were ‘fictional.’ Mine are recollections ... my aim is to outline some of the influences on this Italian kid born near the end of World War II.”

For more about Joe and to purchase his book, visit <https://josephpolacco.me/>

### **Author News**

Last year, John Alessio scheduled numerous book presentations throughout Italy to promote his book, *With Tears and Laughter* that was translated into Italian and published in Italy. Shortly before the first presentation, he was injured and had to return to the United States. John and his wife own property in Joppolo, Calabria – visiting every year – and his book includes descriptions of the area and the conditions that propelled Italian citizens to migrate to America at the turn of the twentieth century.

Several months ago, John and his wife were back in Italy and John scheduled four presentations, all in Italian. His first was at Piccola Università Italiana in Tropea, where he also studied the Italian language. Two of his presentations were on terraces overlooking the Tyrrhenian Sea; in John’s words, “The hosts provided quite a spread afterwards, with incredible trademark Pugliese focaccia and wine at the heart of the meal. The discussion following my presentation was robust and animated. The attendees, who turned into active participants, were really into it, and had strong opinions about various aspects of the presentation’s content..” In his third presentation, John notes: “[the] terrace presents a stunning view of Stromboli and we watched the sun set (tramonto) next to Stromboli immediately following my presentation. The presentation was followed by food, wine, and excellent live music from two very talented musicians, a pianist and a guitarist.”

John writes: “The fourth and final presentation was in Joppolo. .. We met on the covered terrace of the town’s main café/pizzeria ... Like the Puglia presentation, the attendees were very involved – to the extent that they sometimes felt compelled to make comments during the presentation. I didn’t mind the interruptions at all, since they livened the presentation and made it more interactive. Food and beverages were provided and it was a great event.”

Stunning views, Italian food, entertainment, and lively audiences form the perfect setting for a book event in Italy.

Visit <https://www.john-c-alessio.com/> for more about John.

[Book Review](#)

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Read my [review of \*Italian Culture in America: The Immigrants 1880 to 1930\*](#) by Ralph G. Giordano (published June 2024 in *La Gazzetta Italiana*)

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[Joe Tucciarone and Ben Lariccia](#), authors of *Coal War in the Mahoning Valley: The Origin of Greater Youngstown’s Italians*, have posted a new video about “the brutal lynching of Giovanni Chiesa, one of many Italians transported to Ohio to break the 1873 Coal Miners’ Strike. He earns the sad distinction of being the first Italian lynched on U.S. soil.”

[The Lynching of Giovanni Chiesa](#) (YouTube Video)  
[Giovanni Chiesa: Immigrant, Miner, Martyr](#)  
[Book Review](#)

### **Italian American Heritage Project**

This past May, this headline was posted on "[America's oldest continuously-published newspaper](#)," a media outlet owned by "News Corp (Nasdaq: NWS, NWSA; ASX: NWS, NWSLV) ... a global, diversified media and information services company focused on creating and distributing authoritative and engaging content and other products and services:" "[AMC slaps 'Goodfellas' with trigger warning for 'offensive' content that includes 'cultural stereotypes.'](#)"

Comments have since been deleted and the article retitled, "[AMC's 'Goodfellas' Trigger Warning Due To 'Cultural Stereotypes' Sparks Backlash](#)," was posted on another website, "[part of the Post Digital Network](#)," where the comments are extremely unfavorable about the "trigger warning." The person who wrote the article included these quotes "The f—king political correctness has f—king taken everything away," said Bo Dietl ([who played a police officer in Goodfellas](#)) to the Post; and Michael Franzese, [who portrayed a one-time captain of the Colombo crime family](#), said he found the message amusing. "We don't need anyone protecting mob guys. It's crazy," he said. (Underlined for emphasis.) Why didn't the author of this article ask a few leaders of Italian American organizations for their opinions?

About two weeks later, a recently formed Italian American organization – [Italian American Leadership Forum \(IALF\)](#) – did response, requesting "[AMC Add Disclaimer to 'Godfather' Trilogy and Similar Films Depicting Offensive Stereotypes.](#)" No additional information or follow-up has been posted. In the past few years, several new Italian American coalitions have formed, but each seems geared to handling a minimal aspect of the discrimination that Italian Americans constantly face, and most appear content on partnering with cities and businesses in Italy, rather than dealing with Italian American issues. How can American society take Italian Americans seriously when organizations prefer to spend time and money in Italy, and continue to ignore the constant slander from nationwide media and the abundance of denigrating streaming shows, television shows, and movies?

On a regular basis, a News Corp media outlet utilizes mafia connotations – mostly in headlines – and slanderous comments about Italians and Italians Americans in articles.

For this story, "[Inside Tiro a Segno, the members-only NYC club with a gun range in the basement](#)" the home page headline included "Take the gun, leave the cannoli." From the article: "Tiro a Segno was founded in 1888 as a sportsmen's club and members indulged in their hunting hobby at a private preserve on Staten Island." Why the reference to a mob movie?

This headline "[Slain NYPD detective who probed Mafia to get 'well overdue' headstone — 100 years after his death](#)," suggests a Mafia connection with his death, but he was killed in an off-duty pursuit of a robber. From the article: "He was once attached to what was then called the Italian Squad in Manhattan, investigating the Mafia." The article could have led to explaining the prejudices and discrimination Italian immigrants experienced in the early 1900s; instead it capitalizes on Italian stereotypes. Learn more about the Italian Squad: [The True Story of the Italian Immigrant Cops Who Fought the Rise of the Mafia in 1904](#).

According to this headline "[Unearthed skeletons reveal prehistoric Mafia-style torture-killings](#)," the Mafia was in existence more than 5,000 years ago, in – what is now – France. (100 miles west of the French and Italian border.) This story is a summary of a research article written for Advance Sciences, "[A ritual murder shaped the Early and Middle Neolithic across Central and Southern Europe](#);" and while there is no mention of the Mafia in the title, it is mentioned four times in the article. The researchers

referred to “the earliest recorded instance ... dates back to the Italian Mesolithic era” with images from the [Addaura Cave](#) (in Palermo). The Mesolithic Era (Middle Stone Age) throughout all of Europe – not just in Italy, which was not Italy – began around 10,000 years ago. Comparing images from 10,000 years ago and skeletons buried around 5,000 years ago as “associated with the Italian Mafia” is a stretch, and most likely mentioned to tie in “torture killings” with the Mafia. Once again proving how powerful mention of the Mafia is with its negative Italian connotation; which is not only used to garner attention, but embedded in the minds of American society.

In addition to the continuous Mafia association allegations, connecting an Italian identity to any type of wrongdoing perpetuates stereotypes and discrimination of Italian Americans. A [book review about multi-level marketing schemes](#) (MLM), incorrectly mentions [Charles Ponzi](#) – who was a charlatan, but not through multi-level marketing – as the originator of “shady businesses ... that promised investors small fortunes.” Ponzi began his scheme in 1920, forty-one years after [Sarah Howe used the same system to defraud investors](#). Why deceiving investors is named after Ponzi could be based on the discrimination and slander of Italian immigrants during that era; and mention of a Ponzi Scheme today continues to denigrate Italians and Italian Americans.

According to the U.S. Government, [Pyramid Schemes](#) and [Ponzi Schemes](#) – although similar in perpetrating fraud – are different. Additionally, MLM is based on the pyramid scheme of recruiting new members to sell products. Ponzi did not sell merchandise, but instead recruited new members to invest.

Including Ponzi in the article about MLM is misleading. It also appears to be incorrect in claiming Ponzi was Italian American. (He had migrated from Italy to Boston in 1903, and was deported back to Italy in 1934.) More important, though, is that no other person mentioned in the article is identified by their nationality.

[The Rise Of Mr. Ponzi](#) (1935 text of Charles Ponzi’s original manuscript.)

[In Ponzi We Trust](#) (2021)

[The No. 1 Ladies’ Defrauding Agency](#) (2019)

Why won’t the nationwide Italian American organizations, podcasters, and others who claim to promote Italian American culture and heritage address media bias?

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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.](#)

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.](#)

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**

The [Italian American Alliance](#) has issued two calls for action. From its newsletter dated July 10th: "As you may be aware, the mayor of Columbus, Ohio, is currently undertaking the 'Re-imagining Columbus' project to determine how to address Christopher Columbus's legacy, including the statue removed four years ago. It is crucial that we, as members of the community, ensure that this project considers accurate historical facts and recognizes the significance of Christopher Columbus to Italian Americans. This is not just about history; it's about preserving our cultural heritage and promoting understanding." [Reimagining Columbus](#)

From its newsletter dated July 11th: "As we approach the end of the current Massachusetts legislative session, there are still 2 bills pending before the Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight which would cancel Columbus Day and replace it. Can you please take a moment to write the committee members asking them to oppose these bills and to vote against moving them out of committee? You must do this before the end of the current legislative session on July 31st." Visit the [IAA website](#) for more information.

[AMERICA the Beautiful](#) (italic.org; July 5, 2024)

[2024 Italian Fest Canceled, Other Mahoning Valley Italian Festivals Remain on the Schedule](#) (mahoningmatters.com; July 3, 2024)

[NY State's Highest Court Denies Appeal to Stop Removal of Columbus Statue in Syracuse](#) (waer.org; June 13, 2024)

[Frankie Valli Gets His Star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame](#) (italoamericano.org; May 21, 2024)

### **Italy in the News**

[This Italian Vacation Hotspot is Turning Tourists Away as it Runs Out of Water](#) (cnn.com; July 6, 2024)

[Permanent Home Abroad: 7 Best Towns To Retire To In Italy](#) (msn.com; July 5, 2024)

[Italy's Etna and Stromboli Volcanoes Erupt, Catania Airport Closed](#) (msn.com; July 5, 2024)

[Sardinia: Cammino Minerario di Santa Barbara](#) (camminominerariodisantabarbara.org; June 2024)

[Italian Food Awards USA 2024: The Winners](#) (italianfood.net; June 25, 2024)

['Idiotic' Tourist Detained for Carving Name into Ancient Pompeii Wall](#) (nypost.com; June 26, 2024)

[Ancient Beach Destroyed by Mount Vesuvius Eruption in 79AD Reopens After Restoration](#) (cnn.com; June 19, 2024)

[Italy's Cheap Homes Hot Spot Puts More Up For Sale](#) (cnn.com; June 6, 2024)

[US Returns \\$80 Million-Worth of Stolen Artifacts to Italy](#) (cnn.com; May 28, 2024)

[Documentary Illuminates Sardinian Supper for the Dead](#) (franoi.com; May 21, 2024)

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

