



# Italian Historical Society of America

## Newsletter

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BY JANICE THERESE MANCUSO

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

The beauty of Italy emanates around the world through so many facets, and its incredible geography is one of its major allures. It was Dante (1265-1321) who first used [bel paese](#) – beautiful country – when writing the *Divine Comedy*. Petrarch (1304-1374) used the term in the *Canzoniere*, his epic volume of 366 poems. Both are credited with influencing the language of Italy, and for ushering in the Renaissance.

[Petrarch](#), born Francesco Petrarca in Arezzo (around 40 miles southeast of Florence), lived in both France and Italy, was awarded Poet Laureate in April 1341 in Rome, and blended Christian doctrine with humanistic philosophy; he is often cited as the father of humanism. In 1370, he moved to Arquà, an ancient village nestled into the [Euganean Hills](#) (about 30 miles southwest of Padova, region of Veneto).

[He wrote](#) (English translation): “I flee the city as a life sentence and choose to live in a solitary little village, in a pretty little house, surrounded by an olive grove and a vineyard, where I spend my days completely at peace, far from the tumult, the noise, the chores, constantly reading and writing.”

After the unification of Italy, many villages throughout the country were renamed; and the poet’s name was added to the town. Arquà Petrarca, certified one of the [most beautiful villages in Italy](#) (Borghi più belli d’Italia), is a medieval village preserved through time. The character of the village is enhanced by Petrarch’s home – now a museum – and tomb. It’s also enriched by the orchards of [jujube trees](#), the fruit made into a [local liquor](#).

In 1989, [Parco Regionale dei Colli Euganei](#) was formed from “15 Municipalities and covers an area of about 18,694 ha. ... The particular location and volcanic origin, the various climatic conditions, as well as the active human presence since ancient times make the Park a unique territory for its natural treasures, landscape, environment, culture, art, and social-economic aspects.”

Arquà Petrarca is one of the “[15 Municipalities](#),” and it’s noted that “some scholars believe that many sections of his [Petrarch’s] *Canzoniere* seem to be inspired [by the landscape of the Euganean Hills ...](#)” Less than 10 miles northeast of Arquà Petrarca, [Abano Terme](#), “the most important and oldest thermal center in Europe, stands in an enchanting location at the feet of the Euganean Hills and in the center of the Veneto region.” The town is most [known for its hotels](#) that “offer a range of spa and mud treatments, with their own thermal pools,” historical buildings, fountains, statues, and an [international mask museum](#).

Close to the center of town, near the convergence of several roads named after well-known Italians: da Vinci, Galileo, Fermi, Galvani, and Volta, Via Cristoforo Colombo leads to Piazza Cristoforo Colombo. In the center, a [statue of Columbus](#) standing on the bow of a ship, facing west.

[Discover Italy: Unveil the Beauty of the Bel Paese](#)

[Arquà Petrarca Discover the Village, Places and Monuments](#)

[Arquà Petrarca](#) (In Italian; beautiful photographs.)

[Colli Euganei - Euganean Hills, Veneto](#) (YouTube)

[La casa del Petrarca](#) (Scroll down for English translation.)

[Jujube Broth: An Ancient Liquor that Made Ulysses Drunk](#)

[International Museum of the Theatre Mask Amleto and Donato Sartori – Abano Terme Padua](#) (YouTube)

[Fontana Monumento a Cristoforo Colombo 1956](#) (In Italian)

[Columbus Monuments Pages](#)

“601 monuments on this site. This website shows the monuments erected all over the world with a relation to Christopher Columbus, his companions and their early voyages to America.”

### **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.

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

[King of the Mountains: The Remarkable Story of Giuseppe Musolino, Italy's Most Famous Outlaw](#) by Dan Possumato

Dan Possumato learned about Giuseppe Musolino, a distant relative, from his mother: “He was the Robin Hood of Italy.” Falsely accused of murder, Musolino would become an international sensation at the turn of the twentieth century. He escaped from prison and roamed the “mountains and forests of Aspromonte [region of Calabria],” seeking revenge on those who betrayed him, while his charitable deeds gained him “the support of the people.”

Thoroughly researched, *King of the Mountains* provides a look into the life of a man who protected landowners, depended on the community for his well being, and thought about running for Parliament, yet was so elusive that “by the winter of 1901 ... a full regiment of 500 Carabinieri were sent south for the sole purpose of capturing Musolino ...”

Musolino – who “had a custom pair of shoes made ... the heel was in front and the sole behind” to confuse his hunters – outwitted Italian authorities for almost three years. He was unwittingly captured while walking to Rome hoping for an audience with Victor Emmanuel III regarding “political and economic reforms in the south.”

The mindset of a wide percentage of southern Italian people – especially after unification in 1861 – was steeped in mistrust, first established centuries ago with the constant changing of boundaries and land ownership. Dan provides a good overview of a united, but divided, Italy and how it led to the rise of Giuseppe Musolino as *King of the Mountains*.

More about Giuseppe

[Giuseppe Musolino: Brigand King of Calabria](#), Excerpts from the Book

[Giuseppe Musolino - Brigand](#)

[Giuseppe Musolino – Biography](#)

[Birthday Tribute](#) (Instagram)

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

### ***Celebrating Italian American Heritage Month***

The Italian influence on life in America has become so ingrained in American culture, it's mostly not acknowledged; but what would America be without the Italian influence? Would the Declaration of Independence state "all men are created equal," if Filippo Mazzei was not a friend of Thomas Jefferson? Would there be an FBI? What would Mt. Rushmore look like? Would we have whirlpool tubs? Would this country be called America?

Thirty-One Days of Italians was founded to acknowledge people of Italian heritage who have significantly influenced the history and growth of America. In 2006, a directory of Italians and Italian Americans recognized for their significant achievements was compiled and Thirty-One Days of Italians was created. The website features 75 people, and an annual List of 31 provides a person of Italian heritage to learn about and celebrate for each day in October, Italian American Heritage Month.

Every year, the first day in October honors the Italian immigrant and the last day is set aside to honor a person of Italian heritage who is not on the List. Honorary Members on the List are permanent. 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 2024 List includes (in alphabetical order): Father Michael Accolti, Joseph Barbera, Giacomo Costantino Beltrami, Charles J. Bonaparte, Giovanni da Verrazzano, Luigi Del Bianco, the Grucci Family, the Jacuzzi Family, Rocky Marciano, Dean Martin, Robert Mondavi, Amedeo Obici, Sabato Rodia, and Giovanni Schiavo.

View the complete [October calendar of dates and names for 2024 at Thirty-One Days of Italians](#).

The short bios and resources provide study guides for home school, community, and club projects. Learn about all the [incredible people of Italian heritage](#) who significantly contributed their skills and knowledge to American history and culture – and to Italian American history and culture – at Thirty-One Days of Italians.

## **Italian American Heritage Project**

### ***In honor of Italian American Heritage Month***

Another year and another round of mob movies and shows – both new and reruns – capitalizing on the belief that every person of Italian heritage is in a mob or has a mob connection. Sadly, many Italian Americans play into this persona because they do not know about their heritage. They weren't taught about the accomplishments of Italian immigrants in America, they have no pride in their heritage, or they think being a stereotype is cool – as long as it's only an Italian or Italian American stereotype.

The biggest offenders are the people who write, produce, finance, promote, and star in the film industries continuation of this [discrimination labeled as entertainment](#). You will not see this for any other culture. Movies, shows, even commercials go overboard in showing nationalities with a positive perspective, but if it includes someone of Italian heritage, there always seems to be some sort of cultural dig. Where are the [positive role models of Italian heritage](#)?

Broadcasters, journalists, pundits, and social media platforms embody the second group of offenders, followed by educators, and then an assemblage of Italian Americans (if not included in the first three groups).

This past May, several media outlets reported on the (incredulous!) announcement of a trigger warning that “may offend some viewers” for a movie that stereotypes Italian Americans. (See [July/August issue](#) of *Tutto Italiano* for more details.) Although the negative depiction of Italian Americans was mentioned, the opinion pieces claim the movie is a “classic” and a “period piece” representing the “normalized misogyny” (normalized?) of the 1990s. This was the reaction, and it demonstrates the lack of respect for Italian Americans.

What is particularly ironic about mob movies and shows is that in the early years of the industry, Hollywood “classics such as *The Tramp* (1915), *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937) and *Gone With the Wind* (1939) were financed through Giannini.” That’s A.P. Giannini, who founded the Bank of Italy that eventually became Bank of America. A documentary, “[A.P. Giannini, Bank to the Future](#)” premiered last October, but the [video](#) does not appear to be currently available. Films that feature a positive view of Italians and Italian Americans are not very successful.

[A.P. Giannini, Thirty-One Days of Italians](#) (Scroll down.)

In June 2020, “*Gone With the Wind*” was [temporarily removed from distribution](#) because “it showed ‘ethnic and racial prejudices’ that ‘were wrong then and are wrong today.’ Now, it has returned online, accompanied by two videos discussing the film’s historical context.. ... One shows ...how the popular movie’s depiction of black people was controversial even at the time of release. ... The second video is an hour-long panel discussion debating ‘*Gone with the Wind*’s ‘complicated legacy.’”

Would a warning trigger attached to movies and shows that stereotype people of Italian heritage dispel the “complicated legacy”? In November 2022, the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures opened its exhibit [The Art of Moviemaking: The Godfather](#), “offering an exciting glimpse into the process of making a masterpiece.” Would it have been helpful to include a video showing how the movie’s popularity has embedded many with a negative view of those with Italian heritage? The exhibit ends January 2025.

Recent articles from the Italic Institute of America  
[Sopranos: Year 2001](#) (September 7, 2024)

[The Potato Head Mafia](#) (July 28, 2024)

The battle for Columbus Day is still being fought. In July, the [Italian American Alliance](#) (IAA) sent an email regarding another attempt of the Massachusetts State Legislature to replace Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples’ Day. In August, an update: “Our collective efforts ensured that our voices were heard, and our culture and heritage was not ignored. We are told that literally hundreds of emails were sent to Massachusetts legislators respectfully urging the preservation of Christopher Columbus Day. These messages served as a counterbalance to an equally vocal group of uninformed anti-Columbus and frankly anti-Italian advocates.” However, in each MA legislative session the bill returns, and the battle continues.

Earlier this year, the IAA sent an email regarding New Hampshire’s attempt to replace Columbus Day. From the email: “[Friends of Italian Americans](#) had nine speakers testifying against the bill, including Senator Lou D’Allesandro and Representative Susan Porcelli.” The bill was voted down. In July [Governor Chris Sununu signed House Bill 1014](#), stating “Cities and towns in New Hampshire are now required by state law to recognize Columbus Day ... the second Monday in October must be called Columbus Day in all official correspondence. The law went into effect on Sept. 10.”

This shows the importance of Italian Americans taking a stand in the political arena.

The IAA has joined with the [Native American Guardian’s Association](#) (NAGA) to “Educate not Eradicate.” NAGA and the [Italian American One Voice Coalition](#), along with the IAA and other cultural groups schedule regular Solidarity Sessions to

“confront the harmful effects of cancel culture ...” From the [press release](#): “The next Solidarity Session will take place via Zoom on Wednesday, September 25, 2024 at 8 PM Eastern. Members of the Native American and Italian American communities, as well as allies and supporters, are encouraged to attend and participate in this important dialogue. Attendance is free to anyone interested in the important issues discussed.” [Registration is required.](#)

Rather than numerous splinter groups that work independently on their selected issues, Italian American culture and heritage would benefit by a cohesive stand against negative issues – as the IAA, IAOVC, and other regional Italian American organizations are doing in addressing Columbus Day.

Where are the national organizations? Their websites claim they protect and promote Italian American heritage, but what are they doing that actually addresses the issues that stigmatize Italian Americans in American society? Some organizations create stronger bonds with Italy, some hold extravagant galas and bestow awards, some entice younger generations to participate in Italian related events by paying their expenses to attend the events. What are the results of any of these actions? Smaller, regional organizations are achieving positive results, but nationwide the Italian American community needs to band together through intensive marketing and in an appeal on a federal level to rectify the issues that continue to tarnish Italian American history, culture, and heritage.

In the 2019 April issue of *Tutto Italiano*, I wrote “In February, at a meeting to support her bid for presidential nominee, when asked about replacing Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples Day, Kamala Harris said “... when it comes to indigenous Americans, the indigenous people, there is a lot of work that we still have to do, and I appreciate and applaud your point and your effort, and [count me in on support.](#)”

In a [recent interview](#) she said “I believe it is important to build consensus, and it is important to find a common place of understanding of where we can actually solve problems ...” Italian American heritage and history is an American problem. Columbus Day is an American problem. Two incredibly large issues that are important to many Italian Americans, but are often brushed away ... even by Italian Americans.

This is an opportunity for national Italian American organizations to protect and promote Italian American heritage.

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 75 contributors on Thirty-One Days of Italians.](#)

The groups opposing Columbus Day have an organized agenda to eliminate it from America. Although the statements of truth and facts posted on Italian American websites are filled with historical facts, they are not very effective in reaching and educating the intended audience. Columbus Day has lost much of its relevance in

American history; but battles for his legacy in American history are being won. Even so, the war against Columbus and our Italian heritage continues. 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.](#)

### **Podcast: Italian American Life with Frankie D.**

Frank di Piero is the host of the [First Italian American Podcast](#), started in 2013. He writes, "This is more than a podcast, it is a movement to bring Italian Americans together, united and knowledgeable about our past accomplishments, our traditions and culture, our unique individual stories but also and perhaps the most important issue is to bring awareness to the youth and to educate them for the future of Italian America."

Listen to our discussion about Italian American culture and heritage, [Episode 130](#). A great conversation, but somehow my voice didn't transmit properly.

### **On Exhibit**

#### ***Celebrating the Senses: Pavarotti & Arcilesi: A One Night Exhibit of Music and Visual Art***

October 12th, 2024; 6:00 to 9:00 PM

116 Duane Street, New York, NY 10007

In tribute to Pavarotti on his birthday, [AHA Fine Art](#) presents an audio and visual exhibition fusing some of the most evocative arias by one of the greatest tenors of all time, Luciano Pavarotti (1935-2007), with drawings and paintings by renowned artist, professor and New York City resident, Vincent Arcilesi (1932-2022). While Pavarotti's voice glides through the air, a slide show of work by Arcilesi – drawings in sketchbooks/notebooks and some paintings that have not been shown before – "will stream across the walls of his Tribeca loft ... Both Pavarotti and Arcilesi tap into the psyche of heightened romantic, surreal, cathartic sensations and emotions brimming with rage, vengeance, sacrifice and empathy. Similarly Pavarotti and Arcilesi explore and survey a range of melodies and imagery that tell stories while mingling with atmosphere, nature and motifs."

Arcilesi received his BFA and MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. His work has been exhibited internationally since 1966, and is included in both public and private collections. He combined his training as an abstract painter with his interest in French Impressionism to create contemporary paintings depicting the human form in portraits, landscapes, and cityscapes. A full professor at the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT), from the 1990s to his retirement in 2015, Arcilesi taught drawing and painting, and was involved with the Institute's numerous art exhibits, shows, panels, and conferences.

After October 12th, a selection of his work will be on exhibit at AHA Underground, at Jim Kempner Fine Art, 501 West 23rd Street, New York, NY 10011

[Luciano Pavarotti – "Nessun dorma" from Turandot, 1979](#) (YouTube)

[Luciano Pavarotti – "Nessun dorma" from Turandot, 1994](#) (YouTube)

[Vincent Arcilesi Selected Paintings](#)

## Italian American News

Read my article on *La Gazzetta Italiana*

[The Life and Times of Charles Ponzi](#) (lagazzettaitaliana.com; September, 2024)

[The World's Best Pizza for 2024 isn't in Naples – or Even in Italy](#) (cnn.com; September 13, 2024)

[Reimagining History](#) (italic.org; August 29, 2024)

[Bloomingdale's Launches From Italy, With Love](#) (morningstar.com; August 19, 2024)

[A Look Back at Donald Sutherland's 'Italian' Oeuvre](#) (franoi.com; August 20, 2024)

[Tax Breaks for "Inpats"](#) (franoi.com; August 20, 2024)

[Getting to Know Them](#) (italic.org; August 19, 2024)

[At It Again](#) (italic.org; August 12, 2024)

## News about Italy

[How Italy Wants to Help Anyone with Italian Heritage Find Their Roots](#) (forbes.com; September 18, 2024)

[Queen Victoria's Favorite Tuscan Villa for Sale for More Than \\$55 Million](#) (cnn.com; September 15, 2024)

[Rome may Limit Tourist Access to Trevi Fountain](#) (cnn.com; September 6, 2024)

[Sicily Orders Ban on Sale of Mafia Souvenirs](#) (yahoo.com/news; August 25, 2025)

[Italian Authorities Open Manslaughter Investigation into Superyacht Sinking](#) (cnn.com; August 24, 2024)

[GAME-SET-ITALIA](#) (italic.org; August 17, 2024)

[Pompeii Archaeologists Find Bodies of Man And Woman – and Their Treasure](#) (cnn.com; August 12, 2024)

[Tourist is Caught Carving Initials into 2,000-Year-Old Home at Pompeii](#) (cnn.com; August 9, 2024)

[Italian Gymnast Giorgia Villa Goes Viral During Olympics for Brand Deal with Cheese](#) (cincinnati.com; July 31, 2024)

[Stunning Ancient Roman Mosaic Found Submerged in the Sea off Naples](#) (cnn.com; July 24, 2024)

[Remains Of Ancient Papal Palace Believed To Have Been Found In Rome](#) (cnn.com; July 18, 2024)

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

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