

UPCOMING EVENT:
Honoring Italian Americans on Veterans Day

ITALIAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE / VETERANS DAY FILM

"I'M STAYING WITH MY BOYS"
The Heroic Life of Sargeant John Basilone

Sunday, November 5 at 2:00 pm

Admission \$10



PHOTO ABOVE: *This framed print of John Basilone is on display at the Italian Center in Carmichael, CA.*

"I'm staying with my boys...." Is a firsthand look inside the life of one of the greatest heroes of the Greatest Generation. Sargeant John Basilone was lauded by General Douglas MacArthur as "a one-man Army" for his heroic actions on

Guadalcanal and celebrated by the nation. It was the turning point of the war and Basilone's foxhole was the site of the turning point in that battle. That was just the beginning of the legend.

The movie allows viewers to experience the development of Johnny Basilone into a warrior, undefeated light heavy weight boxer and nationally revered war hero.

Basilone is one of the Greatest icons in Marine Corps history. He is the only marine soldier of the war to receive both the Medal of honor and the Navy Cross. His story is part of every marine's boot camp education. Machine Gun John was killed on the beach at Iwo Jima defending his Boys. A postage stamp was issued in his honor.

Admission \$10 / Refreshments Included / Doors open at 1:30 pm

Honoring Italian-Americans on Veterans Day



In the Pacific, **Marine Sergeant John Basilone**, the son of an Italian immigrant tailor, emerged as one of the first Italian Americans to be commended for military valor and the first enlisted man to receive the Medal of Honor during the war. Basilone was the only man in U.S. history to win the country's two highest honor's – the Navy Cross

and the Medal of Honor.

General Douglas MacArthur described him “**as a one-man Army**” when he took on an entire enemy regiment with his machine gun unit on Guadalcanal in 1942. Basilone won the battle. It was the first battle of the war in the Pacific and changed the direction of the war. “Machine Gun John” returned home as a hero to raise millions in war bonds. He then volunteered for the Navy, saying “**I’m staying with my boys**” and returned to the Pacific theater. Basilone died at the battle of Iwo Jima in 1945 at age 29 protecting his men.

In memory of John Basilone, the United States Navy christened a second ship in his honor in 2022. The USS John Basilone is a guided missile destroyer. The first ship named after him was also a destroyer commissioned in 1949 that has been decommissioned.

At the Christening, The Secretary of the Navy said “Gunnery Sgt. John Basilone is a national hero. The USS John Basilone will serve as a Constant reminder of the immense impact that actions taken by one sailor or Marine can truly have.”

A Large framed print of Marine Sergeant John Basilone hangs in the Italian Cultural Center of Sacramento as a symbol of the heroic sacrifice Italian Americans have made in defense of their country.

Captain Dominic Gentile never received the Medal of Honor, but he did receive 26 medals including our country’s second highest award, the Distinguished Service Cross – twice. General Dwight Eisenhower personally pinned the Distinguished Service Cross on him and referred to the 24-year-old Captain Gentile as “**a one-man air force**” for downing 30 enemy aircraft which made him the highest scoring fighter pilot in American history and earned him the title “**Ace of Aces.**”

The Italian American participation in military history deserves to be hailed and known.



As Veterans Day approaches in November, we would like to honor and recognize those Italian Americans who have served our country in times of war.

They have a proud history of military service. Countless Italian Americans have distinguished themselves by their bravery. Italians have fought in every major conflict from the Revolutionary War to the present.

More than two dozen Italian Americans have earned the Congressional Medal of Honor. From 2005 to 2007, three of the six members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff were of Italian descent: Army Lieutenant General Raymond Odierno, Navy Admiral Edmund Giambastiani Jr. and Marine General Peter Pace. Another Italian American, Admiral Lisa Franchetti, has been nominated to take over as Secretary of the Navy and will become a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

More than a million sons and daughters of the immigrant generation served during World War II, making them the largest ethnic fighting group in that conflict, while at the same time, many of their families were restricted on the home front because of their ancestry. President Franklin Roosevelt decided not to intern all Italian Americans when he was informed that over 10% of the armed forces were Italian American. Tens of thousands of Italian Americans died for their country in that war.

The war produced a galaxy of Italian American heroes. **Rosina Bonavita** became the symbol for women working in factories and shipyards in the war effort. **She is better known as “Rosie the “Riveter.”**

Italian-American Medal of Honor Winners:

Pfc. Lewis Albanese (Army)
Sgt. John Basilone (Marines)
M/Sgt. Vito Bertoldo (Army)
1Lt. Willibald Bianchi (Army)
Lt. Vincent Capodanno (Navy)
Cpl. Anthony Casamento (Marines)
S/Sgt. Jon Cavaiani (Army)
Maj. Ralph Cheli (Air Force)
Pfc. James Cicchetti (Army)
Pfc. Michael Colalillo (Army)
T/Sgt. Michael Dalessandro (Army)
Cpl. Anthony Damato (Marines)
S/Sgt. Arthur DeFanzo (Army)
Capt. Reginald Desiderio (Army)
Col. Luigi Palma di Cesnola (Army)
Cpl. Frank Fratellencio (Army)

S/Sgt. Salvatore Giunta (Army)
Pfc. Gary Martini (Marines)
Pfc. Gino Merli (Army)
SFC Jared Monti (Army)
Pfc. Frank Petraca (Army)
WO. Louis Rocco (Army)
Pvt. Michael Valente (Army)
Capt. Hubert Versace (Army)
2Lt. Robert Viale (Army)
Cpl. Joseph Vittori (Marines).

[CLICK TO READ "In Defense Of Our Country"](#)

[CLICK to visit "WWII ITALIAN AMERICA"](#)

Discover Columbus Day Celebration in Sacramento



This year, the Italian Cultural Society celebrated its annual Columbus Day luncheon with a festival at the Italian Center. It was a sold-out event; Columbus would be proud.

From Ferrari's to Folk- Dancers, the day was all things Italian. This year, the festival combined the Italian Center facilities with Entertainment and Bocce in the adjoining Italian Center Park.

The colorful Italian automobiles and the performances by the Childrens "Bambini" dance troupe in their regional costumes added a special Made in Italy flavor to the Festa.





The Cannoli and Gnocchi making workshops were a popular addition to the festival. Of course, our band played Italian music throughout and their singer, Cheryl Tiburzi, was a big hit with the audience.

When you visit an Italian home or event anytime, anywhere, you don't go home hungry. And the Italian Cultural Society made sure that our guests had all they could eat. From the trays of antipasto to the cannoli, our festival kept up the Italian tradition of always having enough food for guests to our welcoming Italian Cultural Center. Our home for the Italian community.

At our events all are welcome and all are family.



The theme of the Columbus Day Festival this year was a tribute to the Italian

American heritage. Columbus Day is an important part of our heritage.

To commemorate the Columbus Day Holiday, the Festival Director Vincenzo Cerruti spoke about the significance of Columbus Day in American history to Italian Americans and to America and why we should celebrate it and protect it.

Columbus Day was first declared a National Holiday in 1892 in recognition of Italian Americans. In fact, it is the only National holiday in the United States in October each year approved by Congress. There are no others.

This year the Holiday was observed, by tradition, on the Second Monday in October on October 9th. The actual date of Columbus' arrival in America was October 12, 1492.

We hope to see all of you at next year's Columbus Day Festival!







[CLICK TO VIEW ALL EVENT PHOTOS: Columbus Day 2023](#)

GRAZIE To All Columbus Day Volunteers!



Columbus Day Celebration Chef, Marco Cerruti

Putting on a festival is, among other things, a labor-intensive event. We are fortunate

we have so many wonderful volunteers who can make things happen.

Our volunteers cooked the food for the buffet line and grilled the chicken and the sausages on site, held the Cannoli and Gnocchi workshops, ran the bocce courts, the beverage booth, the admissions booths, the raffle, the souvenir and information booths, the Ferrari show, gave the speeches and even did the set up and clean up.

Even the children's folk -dancers and their parents were volunteers! We could not have done this event without all of them.

Mille Grazie to:

Diana, Mary & Garrett Quilici, Paula Bravo, Beth & Dino Lozano, Paul & Linda Petrali, Tammy & Annie Cross, Ava Dunham, Janna Doucette, Barbara & Geoff Nickless, Phylis Cupparo, Christian Bauerle, Vincenzo, Bill, Patrizia & Marco Cerruti, Virginia Griffin, Donna Cerelli, Tracy & Donny Atherton, Sue Mazzone, David Marchiorato, Andy Cason, Nick Bloise and Robert Perricone.

Special thanks to Columbus Day Festival Director, Vincenzo Cerruti!

Thank you, Bambini Dance Troupe!

And we would like to thank East Portal Bocce Club volunteer David Marchiorato for managing the Bocce Courts and Due Vigne for the wine tasting.



Italian American Leaders Attend Reception at the

White House on Columbus Day



PHOTO ABOVE: *The Marine Corp Band played Italian songs at the White House on Columbus Day. In 1805, Thomas Jefferson recruited 14 musicians from Italy to form the United States Marine Band.*

First Lady Jill Biden hosted a delegation of Italian American leaders at the White House on Columbus Day, October 12, 2023, to celebrate the contributions Italian Americans have made to our country.

Jill Biden is the First Italian American First Lady. Among her remarks in her address to the nation's Italian American community leaders, she made the following comments:

“Our heritage is much more than our hospitality and food, isn't it? It's the Sicilians who were dragged from their homes and cells and killed in New Orleans by an angry mob. it's “Italians Need Not Apply,” its people like my dad who was never quite accepted by my mom's family because he was Italian. It's a history of those who led movements, who wrote our laws and penned our poetry: of men and women who were courageous, even when they were most afraid.”

Italian Cultural Society Executive Director, Bill Cerruti, was among those who attended the Reception at the White House, as a representative of the Italian Cultural Society. One of the highlights of the event was the Marine Corp Band which played Italian Songs all evening. It was also a gathering of Italian American community

organization leaders from across the country along with Italian American members of Congress.

The President dropped in for a visit and selfies with the gathering.



Dr. Jill Biden hosted a delegation of leaders who are reshaping the scope and vision of the Italian American culture, from the local level to the international stage.

First Lady Jill Biden hosted a delegation of Italian American leaders Thursday evening at the White House to highlight a bellwether of cultural progress that has taken shape within the community.

Dr. Biden, the nation's first-ever Italian American First Lady, met with **Basil M. Russo** — president of the Conference of Presidents of Major Italian American Organizations (COPIAO) — and **his peers** to recognize the sacrifices and celebrate the contributions Italian Americans have made to our country.

"Our heritage is much more than our hospitality and food, isn't it? It's the Sicilians who were dragged from their cells and **killed in New Orleans by an angry mob**, it's 'Italians Need Not Apply,' it's people like my dad who was never quite accepted by my mom's family because he was Italian. It's a history of those who led movements, who wrote our laws and penned our poetry; of men and women who were courageous, even when they were most afraid," the First Lady said in her address to the delegation.

This year's 2023 Presidential Proclamation recognizes the role Italian Americans played in the creation of Columbus Day as a National Holiday.

[CLICK TO READ The Presidential Proclamation](#)

Why We Celebrate Columbus Day



Italian Americans have a saying, “We Discovered it, We Named it, We Built it.”

It was discovered by an Italian (Christopher Columbus), named after an Italian (Amerigo Vespucci), and built on the backs of Italian immigrants.

There are those who would say Columbus was not the first to discover the American continent. What we know is that when he discovered it, it stayed discovered, unlike past explorers.

It was a discovery as much as a prospector discovers gold in the ground.

Columbus arrived in a New World, one unknown to the rest of the world. Although inhabited, the New World was a discovery for the rest of the world.

His voyage into the unknown was one of the most important events in world history. He changed the course of history more than any other explorer. He is rightly recognized for his amazing accomplishment.

His voyage unified the continents and led to the global economy that continues to this day.

From that day to this, Columbus, who was regarded as a national hero of Italian heritage, was embraced by Italian immigrants as a symbol of their long journey for acceptance. Columbus Day helped the Italians to forge a needed sense of national identity and pride in the face of the hostility toward them.

While there are those who contrive and exaggerate accusations about Columbus to suit their purposes and use their grievances to justify abolishing Columbus Day and replace statues of him, Italian Americans seek to preserve Columbus Day as an integral part of their heritage and culture and do not take kindly to those who would dictate who they can celebrate and who their heroes

are, nor should any ancestry group.

PHOTO BELOW: *Italian Immigrants Coming To America*

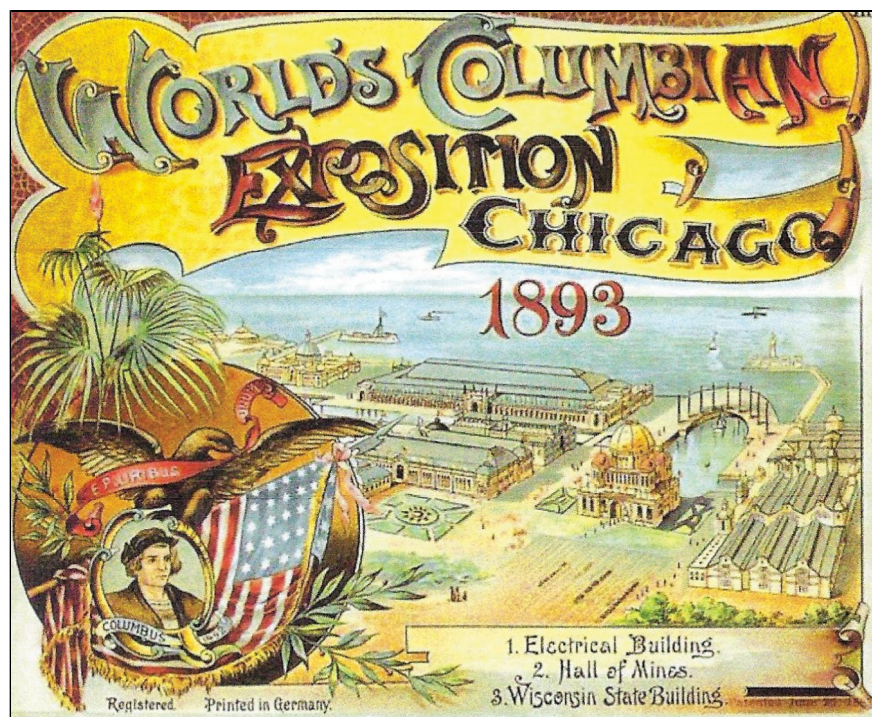


PHOTO ABOVE: *Photo of 1893 World Exposition in Chicago honoring Columbus*

Like so many others, Italian Americans made their own discovery of America.

America is a nation of immigrants, whether earlier migrants from Asia or elsewhere, or immigrants from Europe 700 years ago, or from Africa. They are all immigrants. None are indigenous to America.

Columbus Day was intended to encourage greater acceptance of immigrants following the widespread mistreatment across the nation and mass lynching of Italian immigrants in New Orleans in 1892.

Italian Americans suffered the second highest number of lynchings in the United States of any American ancestry group.

Italy broke off Diplomatic relations with the United States over the incident. There was even talk of war.

In an effort to encourage more tolerance and acceptance of Italian immigrants, President Benjamin Harrison, declared a national celebration of Columbus Day in 1892.



PHOTO ABOVE: UThe Christopher Columbus Statue at Coit Tower in San Francisco's North Beach overlooks the Pacific. Until Columbus voyage, the Pacific Ocean was unknown to the Europeans. The statue was removed during the hysteria of 2020.

The Pledge of Allegiance was written in honor of the holiday.

Columbus discovery became a unifying force for a young America and Italian Americans turned to Columbus as a representation of their heritage.

Columbus Day honors our Italian ancestors as we watch them being dishonored in the present.

One million people gathered in New York to honor the new Columbus national holiday and cheer on the 40,000 strong parade the day after its recognition in October 1892.

The United States hosted the 1893 Worlds Columbian Exposition in Chicago as a celebration of Columbus voyage to the continent 400 years earlier. More than 27 million people attended the 640-acre Exposition during its six-month run. The population of the United States was sixty million at the time.

Columbus Day is a symbol of America and Italian America. As Goes Columbus, So Goes America. You can include Washington, Jefferson and Lincoln to the list of heroes who are being abolished from our history and your own heritage along with them.

Columbus Day stands as a reminder to all immigrants that their unique history and culture will be recognized and to affirm the United States as a nation of immigrants.

One of the most important ideas to come out of the creation of America was that every person be judged as an individual, not when or how their ancestors arrived on these shores.

[CLICK TO VIEW Saving Columbus Day Articles](#)

[CLICK TO READ Why We Need A Holiday](#)

[CLICK TO READ Why Italian Americans Should Be In History Books](#)



PHOTO ABOVE: *The statue of Columbus and Isabella stood in the California State Capitol Rotunda since 1882 until it was removed in 2020.*

Italian Prime Minister Visits New York City's Columbus Circle Monument



PHOTO ABOVE: *Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni*

In September, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni pointedly visited Manhattan's embattled Christopher Columbus statue as a rebuke to New York City's politicians, who are currently trying to rip down the 131-year-old monument that stands at the edge of Central Park.

New York City politicians want to topple the 76-foot statue which was installed in 1892. Meloni participated in a wreath laying ceremony honoring Columbus, just hours after New York's City Council held a hearing on proposed legislation targeting monuments and other artwork featuring the explorer, as well as other icons such as George Washington and Thomas Jefferson.

The Italian Leader stood by the statue in a moment of silence to honor Columbus ahead of the October 12th National Columbus Day Holiday.

Meloni visited the statue to celebrate Columbus Day as a symbol of the cultural history of the American people and show Italian Americans they have the support of the Italian people.

Removing the 76-foot Columbus Circle statue could prove difficult as the National Park Service in 2018 added the monument to its list of protected landmarks. But

other Columbus statues across the city could be on the chopping block.

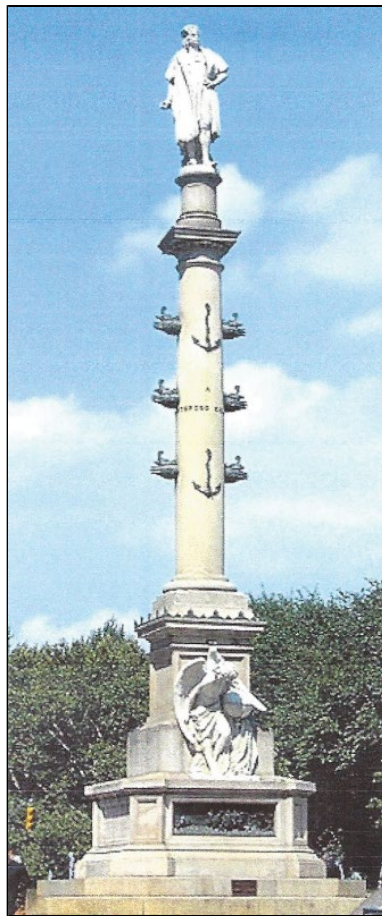
Meloni was in New York City for the United Nations annual General Assembly as one of the major leaders of the free world. She has been the Prime Minister of Italy since October 2022.

She is popular among the Italian People.

PHOTOS BELOW:

(TOP) Statue of Columbus standing in Columbus Circle since 1882.

(BOTTOM) Italian Prime Minister Georgia Meloni stands for a moment of silence before the 76-foot statue of Columbus in Columbus circle, New York. Sept 2023





YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!



[BECOME A MEMBER](#)

[MAKE A DONATION](#)

YOUR SUPPORT IS TAX-DEDUCTIBLE

916.482.5900

italy@italiancenter.net

www.italiancenter.net

PO Box 189427, Sacramento CA 95818

The Italian Cultural Society is a regional community organization dedicated to supporting our cultural heritage through its educations and cultural initiatives.

**PLEASE SHARE THIS EMAIL WITH YOUR FAMILY & FRIENDS BY CLICKING ON
THE SOCIAL MEDIA OR EMAIL LINK BELOW. Grazie!**