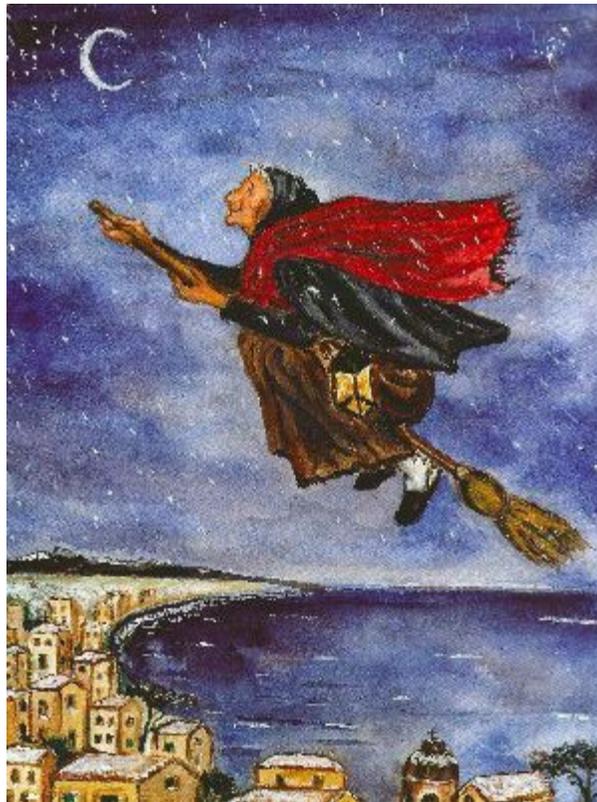




Italian Cultural Center & Museum
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LA BEFANA VISITS THE CHILDREN OF SACRAMENTO AT "FESTA DELLA BEFANA"



LA BEFANA VISITS THE CHILDREN OF SACRAMENTO AT "LA FESTA DELLA BEFANA"

In folklore, the legendary **La Befana** visits all the children of Italy on the eve of January 6, the date of the Epiphany, with presents for the good kids and a lump of coal for the others.

This January 9th, children from the Italian community of Sacramento received a visit from **La Befana** at the 31st annual Children's festival at the Italian Cultural Center celebrating "**The Legend Of La Befana.**"

One of Italy's oldest and most renowned legends, "The Legend Of La Befana, is honored with celebrations dating from the 8th century and is a national holiday in Italy. Celebrations occur throughout Italy, with each city and region having its own customs. In Sacramento and other Italian communities in the United States it has been a tradition to celebrate the day with a children's festival, "**La Festa della Befana.**"

The festival is a magical day of fun and tradition for the children of the Italian community. This year's appearance *by La Befana*, played by Phyllis Cupparo, included a Befana photo booth where kids could take a photograph with **La Befana** in her costume. This year's festival included a storytelling show of the legend by the Society volunteers in costume playing the roles of the three wise men and our own **La Befana.**

One of the highlights of the event was the folk dancing show put on by the Society's children's Bambini and teen folk dancers . This was their first performance since the March 2020 restrictions but they practiced at the Italian Center in advance to get ready for the festival and they were ready.



BAMBINI DANCERS PERFORM AN ORIGINAL DANCE FOR THE ITALIAN CULTURAL SOCIETY

GRAZIE TO THE ITALIAN CULTURAL SOCIETY VOLUNTEERS FOR THE SUCCESS OF THIS WONDERFUL 'FESTA DELLA BEFANA' ANNUAL EVENT:

Phyllis Cupparo, Doris Beckert, Diana, Mary & Garrett Quilici, Kasey, Anthony, Layla & Dominic Bierwirth, Bill, Vincenzo & Christine Cerruti, Gina & Christian Bauerle, Sophia Muller, Marta Cerdan, Paula Bravo, Donna Cerelli and The Bambini Dancers, Patrick & Charlotte Curran, Eileen & Daniel Bardin, Anna Cerdan, Lucas & Guiliana Calderon, Pia Cox, Charlotte and Juliette Lucas.

This year, *La Befana* brought the children of Sacramento a special Pinocchio jump rope gift and passed out chocolate coins from her basket of gold coins to reward the good children who came to see her. Other features of the annual festival included the traditional crafts tables, and the children's book faire which included Befana T-Shirts, Befana books and carrying bags, Italian souvenirs, and a special musical performance by Sophia Muller.

PHOTOS BELOW: (L) Volunteers Christian & Gina Bauerle and Vincenzo & Christine Cerruti (R) Children enjoying the Befana crafts and desserts.



Join the Italian Cultural Society's Children's BAMBINI FOLK DANCERS



JOIN THE BAMBINI DANCERS

Sacramento is one of the few cities in California that has its own performing Italian Folkdance troupes. The Italian Cultural Society has proudly sponsored both an adult Folk Dance troupe, “**BALLIAMO!**” and a children’s folk Dance troupe - “**I BAMBINI!**”

Our Bambini Dance group for children 5 – 18 years of age provides children a wonderful opportunity to connect with their Italian heritage. And have a lot of fun in the process. Anyone who has seen the bambini dance with the joy and smiles on their faces can appreciate how vital this dance program is for kids. And they learn the steps very fast.

Our children’s dance program is special and one of a kind and perform and represent

the Italian community at local festivals and events in their beautiful hand-made regional costumes. The Bambini have performed at the Sacramento Kings and the San Francisco Giants Italian Heritage night games.

This year the Society hopes to grow our children's dance program. We have excellent instructors who give our kids the individual attention they need as well as integrate them into the dances.



CLICK ON THE PHOTO TO WATCH THE BAMBINI DANCERS PERFORMANCE VIDEO AT THE SF GIANTS HERITAGE GAME

If you are interested in signing up your child for the Bambini dance program or would like to attend a scheduled or newcomer practice or invite the Bambini to dance at your event, please contact **Diana Quilici at ics.bambini@gmail.com** or go to the Italian Cultural Website at: italiancenter.net for more information.

ANNUAL NIAF COLUMBUS ESSAY CONTEST



COLUMBUS ESSAY CONTEST

The National Italian American Foundation and the National Christopher Columbus Association are now accepting applications for the annual

Christopher Columbus Essay Contest for high school students.

The first place winner will receive a \$1200 prize and an all expense paid trip to Washington, D.C. at the annual Columbus Day event. Cash prizes are given to the second and third place winners.

The applications are due February 12 .

The theme for this years essay is: *“Christopher Columbus’s expeditions served as a catalyst for cultural exchange on a global scale. How did Columbus’s voyages shape western civilization during his time and in our society today”*

[FOR MORE INFORMATION CLICK HERE](#)



THE COLUMBIAN LEGACY

The amazing voyage of Columbus across uncharted seas into the unknown in 1492 changed the course of world history by uniting the earth's continents. Columbus is considered by historians as the greatest explorer in history. The forces Columbus set in motion brought about a profound transformation of America, Europe, Africa and Asia and initiated a world-wide migration of peoples, plants and animals.

His discovery of the American continent brought in an era of trade and movement of peoples that continues to this day.

For centuries, Columbus has been a symbol of America. The Federal District of the United States is the District of Columbia in recognition of the Columbian legacy.

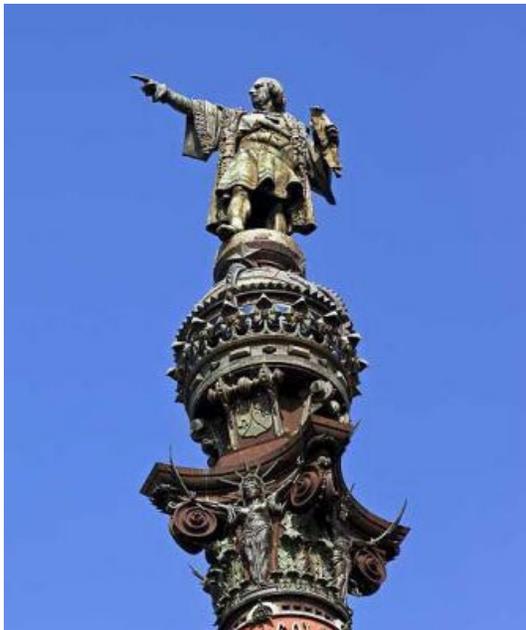
The creation of America began with his discovery and arrival. Columbus Day is a national holiday in the United States in recognition of his amazing voyage and the

millions of immigrants from all over the world who have made their own voyage of Discovery. Columbus is also celebrated in other nations across the world for his achievement. Columbus Day is a national holiday in Italy.

Columbus is especially important to Italian Americans. It is a matter of pride to Italian Americans that Columbus, an Italian from Genoa, crossed the Atlantic Ocean in 1492 on a famous voyage that led to the creation of America and which is named for another Italian explorer, Amerigo Vespucci. Yet another Italian explorer, Giovanni Caboto of Venice laid claim to north American for England.

Columbus Day is a national holiday associated with Italian Americans and is a symbol of Italian American identity. On Columbus Day, Italian American celebrate their own unique cultural heritage and pride in being American. **The Pledge of Allegiance was written to commemorate the establishment of Columbus Day as a national holiday.**

Italian Americans have erected many statues of Columbus in the United States as a tribute to the sacrifices and struggles and contributions of their immigrant ancestors and as a symbol of their presence in the United States. These Columbus monuments are part of the Italian American story and represent our historical experience, our contributions and our quest to be fully included as equals. They are part of the Italian American Columbus legacy that continues in the present day.



COLUMBUS AND THE ITALIAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

Critics of Columbus overlook the magnitude of Columbus's accomplishments.

They miss the point of the creation of America and the story of the many who followed him from around the world on their own journey of discovery.

Just as importantly, they overlook the historical and emotional stake the Italian American community has in Columbus and Columbus Day as a holiday.

The Italian American attachment to their Columbus legacy has and continues to endure despite attempts to rewrite the history of America. These critics would deny the contributions of Columbus and Italian Americans and would tear down the statues of Columbus, eliminate Columbus Day and replace those statues and Columbus Day with those of other tribal or ethnic groups.

These same critics have made false historical claims about Columbus as an excuse to erase and replace his legacy. These critics would deny Italian Americans the right to retain Columbus Day as a holiday and have wherever they could. They would deny Italian Americans the right to erect statues in his honor and have torn down and removed by acts of vandalism and protest and political action across the nation. They would deny and bar Italian Americans from the right to hold their traditional Columbus Day Parades and celebrations and have wherever they have the upper hand.



Of course, to Italian Americans, these statues and this holiday are just as important and just as deserving as those of any other American group. Today's Italian American community, in response

to the critics, have unified in support of their Columbus heritage, value what that heritage represents to the Italian American community and seek to protect that heritage.

Italians were one of the largest immigrant groups to come to America. They were the largest single group of immigrants to arrive on these shores through Ellis Island. Today, they are one of the largest ethnic groups in the United States.

But, the Italian American experience muddies the waters of racial indignation.

Italian Americans have suffered fierce prejudice and discrimination at the hands of mobs, the media, leading newspapers and intellectuals and politicians. The anti-immigrant, anti-Catholic, Ku Klux Klan, was the main opposition to establishing Columbus Day as a federal holiday. Italians were the second largest ethnic group to be lynched in American history. One of the largest mass lynchings in American history took place in New Orleans in 1891 when a mob lynched 11 Italians who were falsely accused and found innocent after a trial.

During World War II, over 600,000 Italian Americans were restricted nationwide.

they were subjected to curfews, travel restrictions, and required to carry identity cards or risk arrest for any violation of these restrictions. They were also forced to endure seizure of their personal property and mass relocations as well as internments for the duration of the war. **Their only crime was being of Italian ancestry.** Their language and culture were suppressed during the war years and did not recover. After the war it was not ok to be too Italian. This is a little known and painful episode in the Italian American experience that Italian Americans refer to as ***“Una Storia Segreta”*** – A Secret Story. It is not even a footnote in today’s history books. Yet, these events occurred within our living memory.

For Italian Americans, celebrating Columbus Day has long been a building block of their national identity, unity and pride along with their foodways and cultural traditions. Columbus has been a symbol of Italian America and its aspiration to be fully included in the story of America, to be treated equally. Taking away the monuments that Italian Americans have erected and the holidays they have celebrated is an attack on Italian America and all that goes with it.



It really is that simple.

The challenge for today's American society is to recognize and respect Italian Americans and their traditions, including their Columbus traditions. The challenge for today's Italian Americans is to claim and protect their heritage and traditions, including their Columbus legacy.

Columbus has affected the Italian American way of life for generations. Italian Americans worked hard to gain recognition of Columbus Day as a holiday across the nation and adopted it as their own. Now these gains by earlier generations are threatened. To rip this holiday from Italian Americans denies them this historical legacy.

If any group has a vested interest in Columbus, in the Columbus statues and monuments they have erected, and in the right to celebrate Columbus Day as a national holiday with public celebrations and parades, it is the Italian Americans.

Present day attempts to interfere, bar and exclude Italian Americans from their long tradition of celebrating Columbus are discriminatory and a violation of their civil rights as an American group of people based on their ancestry.

Current attempts to remove and replace Italian American symbols such as

Columbus with those of earlier migrant groups from Asia and other ethnic, racial and tribal groups based on false proclamations of inequity are proof of that discrimination and the violation of their right to be represented and treated equally.

The actions by public officials and private institutions to exclude Italian Americans are all cut from the same cloth. They represent a history of continuing exclusion and prejudice, rather than a history of inclusion for Italian Americans.

Italian Americans are excluded from the history taught in our nation's schools. They are excluded from ethnic studies programs in the educational system. And now, one of their most important symbols of their American lives is being taken away from them.



As the discrimination against Italian Americans and their Columbus traditions continues the resistance by Italian Americans also continues. The confrontation over Columbus symbolizes the extent of the dilemma Italian Americans face in today's society to rescue their heritage from the unappeasable ire of the forces against them.

In recent years, some of the most important initiatives by Italian Americans to resist have been to bring this issue to the courts to protect their rights and to mobilize the Italian American communities to prevent the further systematic discrimination against them by American institutions.

As Goes Columbus, so goes the Nation

Americans have their historical heroes they honor and Columbus is one of them along with such greats as Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln and Roosevelt. All of them helped create the American Dream. All have statues and monuments dedicated to them and all are celebrated. All are part of the American heritage. Columbus is especially important to Italian Americans.

The dilemma faced by Italian Americans in retaining their Columbus legacy and their way of life is the same dilemma faced by other Americans who see their heritage being lost to the same grievance movements and people who are

removing the statues of Columbus and other American icons who represent that American heritage. While Columbus is being attacked it is only a matter of time before all the symbols of America which represent the immigrant roots and the gains of the past generations are suppressed.

If you are interested in more information about Columbus, you're encouraged to visit our website at [SAVING COLUMBUS DAY \(italiancenter.net\)](http://SAVING COLUMBUS DAY (italiancenter.net))



SICILIAN CUCCIDATI VIDEO RECIPE (Sicilian Fig Cookies)



CLICK THE IMAGE ABOVE TO START THE VIDEO

The Italian American Museum of Los Angeles is one of Italian America's newest Museums. The Museum opened its doors in 2015 in the Historic Hall in a former Little Italy section of downtown Los Angeles. Los Angeles is home to the nation's fifth largest Italian American population and to one of the newest and largest Little Italy districts in the nation in San Pedro, California. The Museum is dedicated to preserving our Italian American history and telling our story through state of the art exhibits on the Italian American experience in southern California.

We are pleased to offer a video demonstration on making "Cuccidati" – Sicilian Fig Cookies courtesy of Marianna Gatto, Director of the Italian American Museum Of Los Angeles.

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