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The Italian Cultural Society & Italian Center & Museum
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Spring 2026 Edition

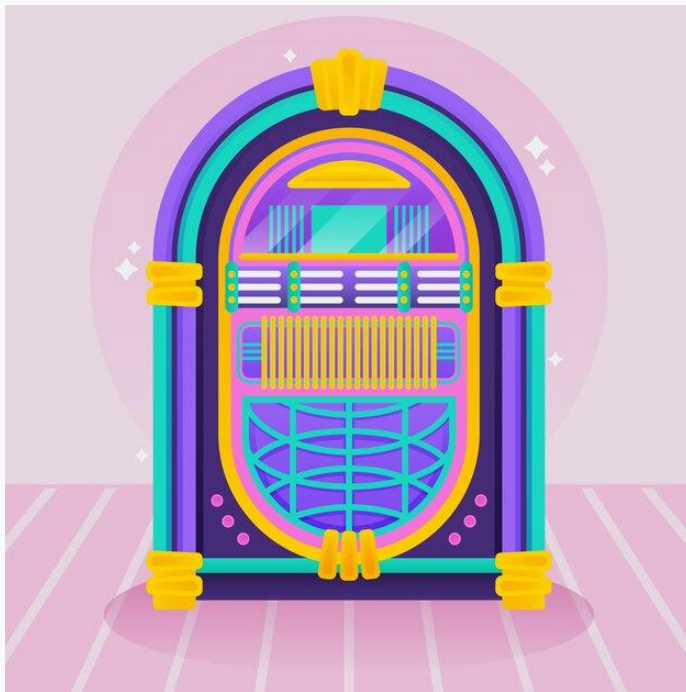
EDITOR: WILLIAM CERRUTI



ALTRE VOCI

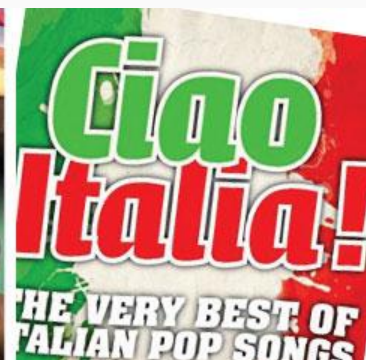
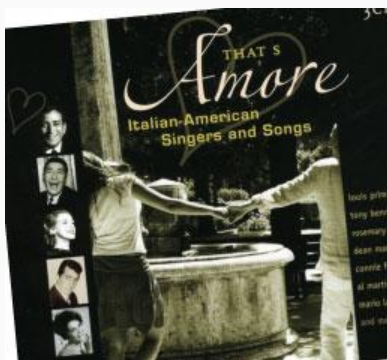
THE E-NEWSLETTER OF THE ITALIAN CULTURAL SOCIETY

SACRAMENTO, ITALIAN STYLE
THE ITALIAN AMERICAN RADIO SHOW



Listen to the Music of Italy and Italian America

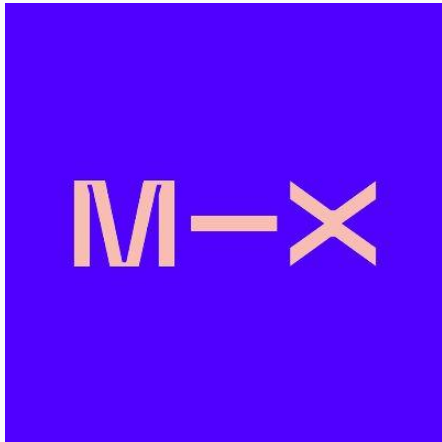
Sacramento Italian Style has been broadcasting in Sacramento since 1982 on local radio stations. It has been sponsored by the Italian Cultural Society for the past 45 years. The show now airs in a new podcast format instead of on the radio.



Listen to Sacramento, Italian Style on the MixCloud Podcast:

- **Download the MixCloud App** (photo below) **on the device of your choice.**
- **Create an account and search '*SacramentoItalianStyle*' to see and listen to podcasts!**

Or Click Link: <http://www.mixcloud.com/sacramentoitalianstyle/>





The new format allows ten hours of shows to always remain on the Mix Cloud. The shows are listed in order with a title.

“Sacramento Italian Style” is hosted by award winning announcer and producer Phyllis Cupparo.

Some of her current shows available include Italian Music from the Movies, from the Milano Cortina Olympics, (Bocelli singing Nessun Dorma), Italian composers, Italian Duets and Fall favorites.

Phyllis records a variety of Holiday shows for Christmas, Valentines Day, and St Patrick's Day. The St Patrick Day show has a mixture of Italian and Irish artists including duets by Bocelli and Ed Sheeran, Sinatra and Bono, Sinatra and Crosby, Pavarotti and Sting, and Pavarotti and Mariah Carey, Mario Lanza singing Danny Boy, and Connie Francis singing songs from her Irish Favorites album.

Upcoming specials include theme shows for Easter, Mother's Day and Father's Day. Her show also features news from Italian America and Italian Cultural Society activities.

The Italian Cultural Society is known for its excellent cultural heritage programs which cannot be found elsewhere. The Radio Show is one way we support our Italian American musical heritage.





[Click to Read: MUSICAL MIGRATION; FROM ITALY TO AMERICA](#)

[Click to Read: ITALIAN AMERICAN MUSIC DECADE](#)

CELEBRATING HERITAGE
AT THE ITALIAN CENTER

WINE TASTING WITH MONTOLIVA VINEYARDS



CHILDREN'S FOLK DANCERS ENTERTAIN



**The Bambini Dancers at 2026 'Made In Italy' Automotive Show
with A.P. Giannini's 1933 Lincoln**



[Click to View Bambini Performance at SF Giants Heritage Night](#)

"A TAVOLA" COOKING CLASS





DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS



VIRGINIA PETRALI



PHYLLIS CUPPARO and DORIS BECKERT



DONNA CIRELLI, MARTA CERDAN and PAULA BRAVO



DIANA QUILICI AND GARRETT QUILICI



Above: **PATRIZIA CINQUINI CERRUTI**

Below: **VINCENZO CERRUTI**



BILL CERRUTI, Executive Director

LITTLE ITALY PROJECT UPDATE

Italian American roots run deep in the history of East Sacramento.



LITTLE ITALY FAMILY HISTORY EXHIBIT

The Little Italy History Committee has made great progress collecting family histories during the past year. The committee is continuing to collect histories while preparing its collection for an exhibit later in the year.

Dozens of Italian families who lived, played and worked in Italian East Sacramento over the past century have given rare photos and memories that will document the history of the Italian community in Sacramento. Families from other areas of Sacramento are included in the collection.

The importance of the project took a while to catch on but through the outreach efforts of the History team the project has gained momentum with new families coming forth with their own collections.

Previous community history projects in the Italian Community laid a strong foundation for the current project, which honors the immigrants and their

descendants. The memories being collected in words and pictures and even artifacts will ensure that our ancestors will not be forgotten and their memory will elevate us all.

The project leaders and their team are in the process of mounting the family and business histories for the exhibit. Special thanks go to team leaders Bill Cerruti (Project Director), Marie Booth (Project Coordinator) and Ron Pane (Project Assistant) and the field volunteers who went out and made sure our people had the opportunity to share their stories.

For those who grew up in east Sacramento, the Italian presence was well-known. But this project revealed it was far more extensive than imagined with hundreds of Italian families concentrated in the area. Many city blocks have been documented as predominately Italian.

The project team is motivated by a sense of making history come alive.

The Exhibit collections will be archived at the Italian Cultural Center for more permanent displays.

LITTLE ITALY BANNER



The Little Italy Project is making progress on acquiring more Little Italy signs to mark the Historic District. Under the sponsorship of the Italian Cultural Society additional banners and pole top signs are being sought for the Little Italy District where they will be prominently displayed.

This is an expensive part of the project and will require fundraising in the Italian community for it to happen. There will be more to come on that subject.

Project leaders for the acquisition of new banners and pole toppers are Bill Cerruti and Steve Maviglio. **The Italian Cultural Society is sponsoring the project and helping to underwrite the initial phases.**

There are many other goals that have been established for Little Italy including more business participation, a central gathering and entertainment space, posters, maps of historic locations, murals and more.

Anyone who can help with the fundraising should cut a check and sent it to the Italian Cultural Society at P.O. Box 947, Carmichael, CA 95609, or donate online at: **Italiancenter.net/donate.**

CLICK ON THE BUTTON OR SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW TO MAKE A DONATION

[CLICK HERE TO MAKE A DONATION](#)



Anyone interested in sharing their family's history should contact Marie Booth at: bmbooth@gmail.com.

[Click to Read: THE 48TH STREET ITALIANS](#)

ITALY SHINES IN WINTER OLYMPICS



Italy came away from the 2026 Winter Olympics with its best showing since the 20 medals it won at the 1994 Lillehammer Olympics in Norway. Blowing away their previous best, Italy's 30 medals at Milano Cortina were the 3rd most captured by any nation at the 2026 games, behind only Norway's 41 medals and Team USA's 33 medals.

Italy shined brightest in speed skating, capturing four medals in short track events, including one Gold, and five medals in distance events, including three Golds. Francesca Lollobrigida won gold in both the 5,000- and 3,000-meter events, setting an Olympic record in the latter, which was held on her 35th birthday.

Arianna Fontana, also 35, netted three of the country's four short track speed skating medals, including a gold medal in the 2,000 – meter mixed relay. Her three medals this year pushed her total to 14, dating back to the 2006 Turin games when she was 15. **She is now the winningest Italian Olympian ever.**

Another team Italy highlight was delivered by Skier Federica Brignone, 35 who won the Gold in the Super G and Giant Slalom, becoming the oldest female Medalist in Olympic alpine skiing history. Lisa Vitozzi became the first Italian athlete to win Olympic Gold in the biathlon.



Team USA also outdid all previous Winter Games performances this year, racking up 12 gold, 12 silver and 9 bronze medals. **Among the Americans who took to the podium were three of Italian descent.** Hayley Scamurra earned a gold, Mia Manganello took bronze and Alex Hall whose mother hails from Bologna and who holds dual citizenship, won a Silver.

From the opening ceremony in Milano to the closing ceremony in Verona's Arena, Italy wowed the world with stunning Musical performances by Andrea Bocelli and Laura Pausini, parades of athletes from 130 counties of the world, a fantastic water dance show and a dramatic and entertaining performance of Verdi's Rigoletto.

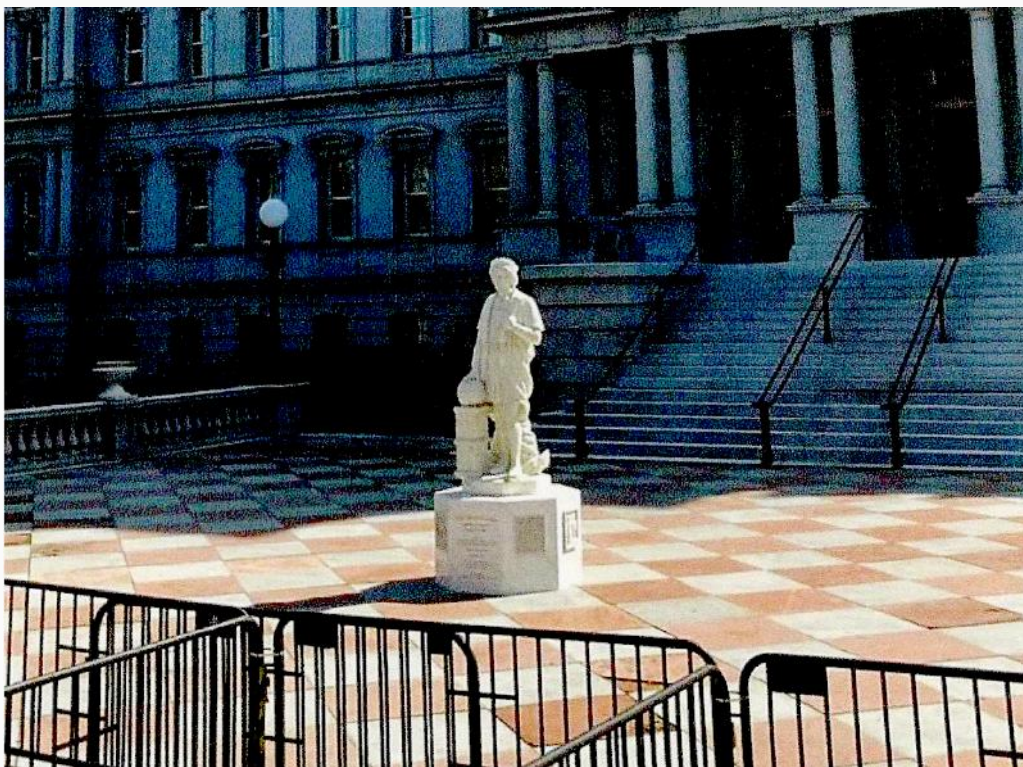
Italy put its best foot forward in hosting a magnificent Olympic program for millions around the world to see and enjoy. **And team Italy put their best foot forward with outstanding performances at the 25th Winter Olympics. They made us proud of our Italian roots.**



HELLO COLUMBUS!



CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS STATUE INSTALLED ON WHITE HOUSE GROUNDS



A statue of Christopher Columbus was installed on the grounds of the White House in March, as part of President Trump's effort to position the explorer as a hero after monuments to him were removed across the country during the hysteria and mob rule of 2020.

The new statue was erected on the north side of the Eisenhower Executive Building facing Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, which houses offices for White House staff and is next to the West Wing, where it will celebrate our nation's founding. A second statue was placed on the White House grounds titled Freedom's Charge representing the revolutionary struggle to win America's independence.

The statue of Columbus is a replica of one the protestors in Baltimore tore down and dumped into the city's inner Harbor in the summer of 2020. The statues' marble pieces were retrieved from the harbor, and a Maryland artist used them to guide the creation of the replica.

More than 30 Columbus statues were taken down in the span of 4 months, either torn down or removed by officials during the riots of 2020. Around 130 Columbus Statues remain. There are more statues of Columbus in the United States than any other historical figure except George Washington and Abraham Lincoln.

Many of the monuments celebrating the explorer, including the one that was once in Baltimore, were donated by Italian American groups in the 19th and 20th centuries. President Reagan spoke at the dedication ceremony for Baltimore's statue in 1984. Since 2020 some of the statues that were dismantled around the country have found new homes in churches, museums and Italian American organizations.

Italian Americans have vigorously opposed removing Columbus monuments from a place of honor in public spaces. They see the statues of the Italian explorer from Genoa as a symbol and expression of ethnic pride and cultural identity, commemorating a time when their ancestors faced extreme

discrimination and persecution.

In a proclamation last year (2025), the President called Columbus “the original American hero, a giant of western civilization, and one of the most gallant and visionary men to ever walk the face of the earth.”

“This is Columbus making a comeback from the darkest days that existed five to six years ago,” said Basil Russo, the leader of the Conference of Presidents of Major Italian American Organizations, who brokered the transfer of the statue to the federal government.

The Leadership Conference represents the voices of Italian American organizations across the nation and has been the main advocacy group for Italian Americans at the national level. The Italian Cultural Society is a member of the Conference. The Conference has taken the battle to save Columbus monuments and holidays to the courts with a string of legal victories.

CABRINI MONUMENT TO REPLACE COLUMBUS IN CHICAGO



In 2020, the graffiti marred statue of Christopher Columbus in Arrigo Park was unceremoniously yanked from its pedestal and stored on its back in a Chicago park district warehouse. After a protracted legal fight, the Joint Civic committee of Italian Americans was finally able to win its release.

In a bittersweet turn of events, a monument to St. Frances Cabrini, the first American saint, will occupy the pedestal in Arrigo Park where Christopher Columbus once stood. Having another iconic Italian memorialized in Arrigo Park preserves the ethnic character of a space that is profoundly meaningful to the Italian community.

After a four-and-a-half-year legal battle over the return of the Columbus statue to Arrigo Park after its removal by the City, the Columbus statue will be moved to the Chicago Museum of Italian Migration located on Taylor Street, in Chicago's original "Little Italy" enclave.

According to Ron Onesti, founder of the Chicago Museum of Italian Migration, locating the statue to the Italian Museum will give our community a way to preserve our community's legacy in Chicago for future generations. The statue will be part of an exhibit at the museum on the World Columbian Exposition held

in Chicago in 1892.

Chicago once had three Columbus statues. All were removed in 2020 after riots broke out in America's major cities.



VIRGINIA'S NEW GOVERNOR ATTACKS COLUMBUS DAY



The Columbus statue in Richmond, Virginia, was erected in 1927 by Italian immigrants. In 2020, a young mob lynched and ripped down the statue.

Originally, the statue was opposed by the Ku, Klux Klan. What the Klan could not achieve the young mob did.

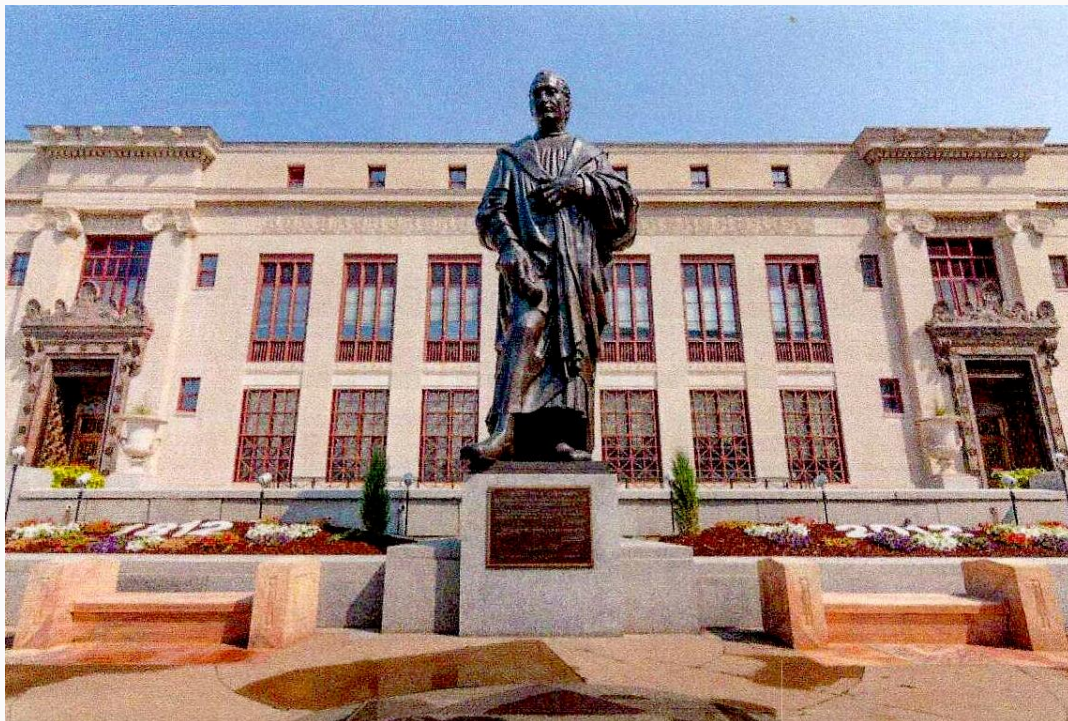
Fast forward, the newly elected Governor of Virginia, Abigail Spanberger, has joined the Columbus hate bandwagon. Almost immediately after being sworn in on January 17, she disparaged Columbus and has all but promised to replace Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples Day.

In an open letter to Governor Spanberger, the Italian American One Voice Committee, a national anti-defamation advocacy group, urged her to **stop marginalizing Columbus Day- a holiday that Italian Americans view as inseparable from their struggle for acceptance in the United States.**

According to Andre DiMino, leader of the One Voice Committee, **“Christopher Columbus is as much a cultural symbol for Italian Americans as he is a historical figure for the creation of America.**

“Calls to eliminate Columbus Day repeats an old pattern, marginalizing Italian Americans in the name of racial progress. More than a century after its creation, Columbus Day endures not because Italian Americans deny history, but because they remember it.”

COLUMBUS, OHIO SEEKS NEW LOCATION FOR COLUMBUS STATUE



The statue of Columbus in Columbus, Ohio stood prominently in front of Columbus City Hall for 65 years, from 1955 until its removal in 2020.

In May 2020 civil unrest broke out in downtown Columbus for three days. Stores were burned and windows on the State house were damaged. The statue was removed from public view by the mayor and placed in storage.

The 22-foot, 3-ton statue was a gift from Genoa, Italy and transported from Italy to America via the Italian Ocean liner “Cristoforo Colombo.” It was dedicated in 1955 in front of 100,000 people as part of the city’s Columbus Day celebration.

There is a new initiative underway in Columbus to find a new space for the historic statue.

BREAKING NEWS! ITALIAN AMERICANS FILE LAWSUIT TO RESTORE COLUMBUS STATUE TO ITS ORIGINAL PLACE OF HONOR

Led by attorney George Boschetto, coming off a string of stunning victories in Philadelphia and elsewhere, he will lead his legal team into battle with the City on behalf of a coalition of Italian American groups in a major federal lawsuit.

Boschetto and company argue that the removal of Columbus was not only unlawful but also discriminatory. The lawsuit claims the statue was a symbol of the city’s heritage and its historic bond with Genoa, Italy. The statue should never have been removed, and its continuing absence is an ongoing injustice to the Italian American community of Columbus and all Italian Americans in the country.

The statue was unveiled as part of Columbus first sister- city agreement. The gift, from Genoa, was made with the express understanding that the statue would remain permanently displayed outside city hall “forever.”

The statue was not merely civic decoration. The bronze Columbus was a pledge of friendship between two cities and the public recognition of the role Italian Americans played in the life of Columbus, Ohio. **The statue became a visible sign of belonging for generations of Italian American families.**

WHY COLUMBUS MATTERS - A VITAL PART OF OUR HERITAGE

WHY COLUMBUS MATTERS – A VITAL PART OF OUR HERITAGE

“Columbus still matters to Italian Americans and removal of his statues strips away the recognition that Italians fought so hard to earn. The destruction, defacement, loss, and removal of the Columbus Statues is a day of mourning for all Italian Americans who care about their history. These statues are a symbol of our history, our heritage, and our contributions. Their removal diminishes us. It is part of a larger effort to marginalize us and erase Italian Americans from history. Italian Americans deserve better; they deserve to be remembered.” (Patrizia Cinquini Cerruti, July 2020, Director of the Italian Language School).

“It’s about Cultural Preservation. To preserve the rich legacy of our ancestors and ensure Italian American names, symbols and traditions are honored, not canceled.” (Bill Cerruti Executive Director of the Italian Cultural Society)

CLICK TO READ: [Why Columbus Day Matters](#)

CLICK TO READ: [Why Columbus Day Matters To Italian American Students](#)

CLICK TO READ: [2025 Columbus Task Force Report](#)

PIONEER OF ITALIAN AMERICAN UNITY



In November of 2025, national Italian American Leader Basil Russo traveled across the country to San Francisco where he was the keynote speaker at the San Francisco Italian Athletic Club Award Dinner.

Russo leads the Conference of Major Italian American Organizations, a coalition of 75 major Italian American organizations and cultural institutions from across the nation. Familiar with the challenges the Italian American community faces today, Russo has created national initiatives to elevate the stature of Italian Americans throughout the country.

He is known as a leader who listens to the voices of the Italian local community and cultural organizations and takes action to represent them. As the President of the Conference, he has launched an unprecedented movement to unite Italian Americans nationwide.

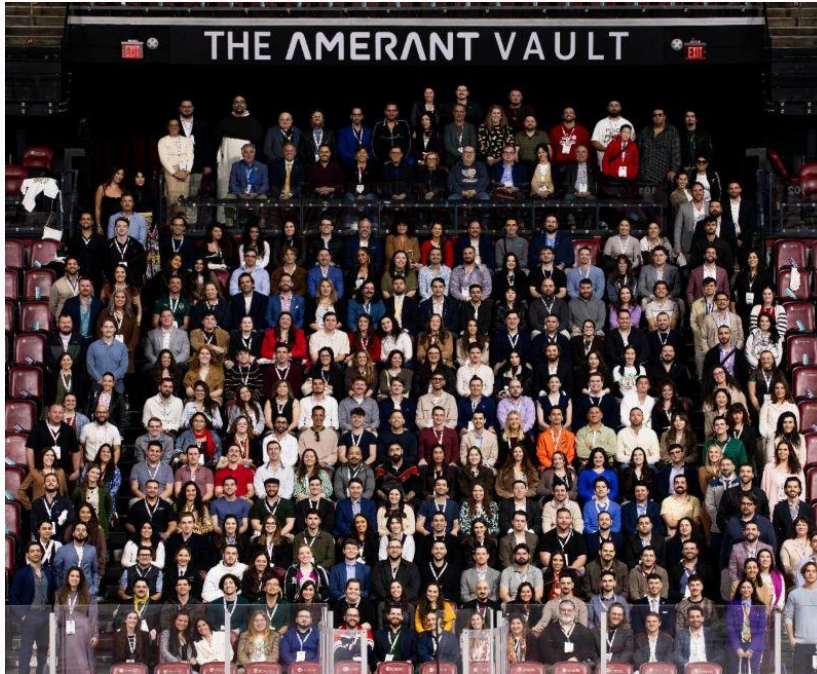
According to Russo, “other ethnic groups have accomplished much more on a national level than the Italian American community has because they have been much better organized than we have been. If Italian Americans want to have a meaningful role in influencing our nation’s collective culture, we need to join hands and work together.”

All four of Russo’s grandparents were born in small mountain villages in Sicily, and all of them settled in the Italian enclave of Cleveland, Ohio.

Russo has had a long history of involvement and leadership in the Italian community. From Cleveland City council leader to a law practice and judgeship to serving on the boards of other national Italian American organizations.

When the Columbus hysteria was at a fever pitch, he stepped up to the presidency of COPOMAIO in 2021. “The lack of respect shown to our statues, our parades and our day was a wake-up call for our community,” Russo explains. “Everyone was looking for ways to address the issue and defend our history and heritage.”

He reached out to other Italian American community leaders to participate in his first national summit held by zoom in 2021. It turned out to be an overwhelming experience when over 350 people participated in the summit. “It was a very emotional experience for me.”



Russo has set a sweeping agenda for COPOMAIO that has included;

- **Organizing an annual Future leaders conference for Italian American youth from across the country.** Held in Florida each year it attracted over 350 young Italians in 2026 and continues to grow each year.
 - **Established a national Committee for Italian American Museums and Cultural Institutions which includes Museums and Cultural Centers across the nation where they work together on issues of common interest.**
 - **In response to advocacy from the Museum and Cultural Institutions**
-

committee he has sponsored legislation in Congress to establish an Italian American Museum on the national mall.

- **Saving Columbus Day has become a major Project for Russo.** He arranged for the new Columbus statue to be erected on the White House ground and has worked with White House staff to ensure that presidential proclamations on Columbus Day pay tribute to the role and contributions of Italian Americans.
- **Under Russo, COPOMAIO Attorney George Boschetto has won a string of legal victories to save Columbus Day in major cities.**
- **Russo has been active in promoting Italian language and educational initiatives to include Italian Americans in the story of the nation. And in unifying Italian American organizations to support social justice initiatives on behalf of Italian Americans.**

For Russo it's a family affair. He has enlisted his two sons to sponsor the Russo Brothers Italian American Film Maker forum which provides grants to aspiring Italian American filmmakers. So far more than a half million in grants have been made. His sons, Anthony and Joe Russo are well known for their success as acclaimed film directors of several Marvel films.

It is rare for a single Italian American leader to have such an impact in unifying the Italian American people. His success is our success. For those of us who have waited for such inspirational leadership at the national level beyond our own local efforts, it has been a long time in coming.

The Italian Cultural Society of Sacramento is a proud member of COPOMAIO and a participating member in the Youth conference, on the Cultural Institutions Committee, and Columbus Day advocacy.

EXPANDING OUR CULTURAL AWARENESS

By showcasing the individual and collective accomplishments of Italian Americans, we inspire our cultural community and future generations to appreciate the significance of their heritage and the contributions Italian Americans have made and continue to make in all fields.



DID YOU KNOW...?

**FILIPPO MAZZEI**

"All men are by nature equally free and independent."

Did you know that Thomas Jefferson derived "All Men are created equal" from an essay in the 1774 Virginia Gazette penned by his friend Filippo Mazzei who wrote under the pen name of "Furioso." The native Italian was one of the leaders in the fight for American independence. Born near Florence, Italy he arrived in the United States at the invitation of Benjamin Franklin in 1773. Upon his arrival in Virginia, he was introduced to Thomas Jefferson and George Washington. He had arrived with an enormous number of vines, shoots and other clippings from his native Tuscany. Jefferson persuaded Mazzei to purchase a fourteen-hundred-acre farm next to his own home, Monticello. Mazzei named his farm "Colle" and started work on his great agricultural experiment.

Jefferson had taught himself Italian while at college and admired Italian music

and culture. Mazzei prospered as a farmer and became involved in colonial politics. He had a flair for writing. Jefferson encouraged him to write his thoughts in Italian so that he could translate them into English. In 1774, Mazzei began writing a pamphlet he entitled "Principle of the American Revolution by a citizen of Virginia." In that document was the statement "tutti gli uomini per natura egualmente liberi e indipendenti" (All men are by nature equally free and independent)." The famous phrase used by Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence. In 1980, a US postage stamp was issued in Mazzei's honor.

SALVATORE GUARAGNA
Master of Melodies



His name was Harry Warren, but he was born Salvatore Guaragna of Brooklyn. He was one of eleven children of Italian immigrants. His father changed the family name to Warren when Salvatore was a child. Like many Italian immigrants, a name change was spurred by discrimination.

During his long career he wrote 500 songs, scored 300 movies, and 100 animated cartoons. He won three Oscars for music at the Academy awards and worked for all four major Hollywood studios. His hit songs of the 1930s 40s and 50s are not that familiar to us except *That's Amore*, an Italian American standard made famous by Dean Martin.

Some of his popular 1930s songs included *Were In The Money* and *Lullaby of Broadway*, *There will never be another You*, and *I Only Have Eyes for You*. in the 1940s he penned *Chattanooga Choo Choo* which the Glenn Miller band made famous. His 1942 melody *At Last* was later recorded by Etta James in 1960. In 1943, Warren wrote the love song *You'll Never Know*, a staple of the war and in 1945 he wrote the *Atchison, Topeka and the Santa Fe*, sung by Judy Garland. **Warren was the first to write music for films. He was called "the invisible man of Hollywood music."** His contributions to American culture are not often recognized, nor is the fact that he was Italian American.

ROSINA BONAVIDA
AKA Rosie The Riveter



ABOVE: Rosina {Rosie The Riveter} Bonavita , on right, with riveting partner Susan Esposito in 1944

During World War II, America's women answered our nation's call to action. Millions of American women went to work in the factories, shipyards, aircraft and other war industries in support of the war effort as millions of men shipped overseas for combat.

From the bombing of Pearl Harbor in December 1941 to the surrender of Japan in June 1945, more than 12 million men and women served in the nation's military. Among them were more than one million Italian Americans who constituted some 10% of the American fighting force. They were the largest ethnic group to serve in the war.

Italian American women also played a large role in the war effort. Among them was Rosina Bonavita, the original Rosie the Riveter, who felt called to duty while her 3 brothers and fiancée served in combat.

During the war, 21-year-old Rose Bonavita worked on an aircraft assembly line at the GM plant in Terrytown New York along with fellow Italian American worker and cousin, 28-year-old Jennie Florio.

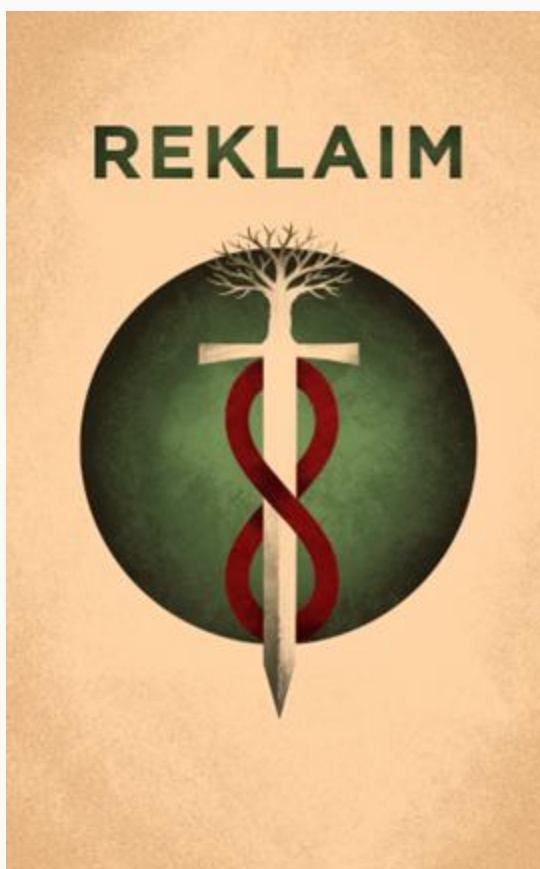
Together they set a record in putting 3,300 rivets in an airplane tail section in six hours in 1943. The two were recognized by President Franklin Roosevelt in honor

of their outstanding work. Rosie went on to set a speed record in assembling a wing in four hours with another Italian American woman, Susan Esposito.



INTERVIEW WITH ITALIAN AMERICAN AUTHOR ENZO ARDIRE

[CLICK HERE TO READ THE INTERVIEW](#)



In the second installment of our Amici Della Cultura interview series, the Italian Cultural Society explores the science fiction universe created by an Italian-American author from the Sacramento region.

In Enzo Ardire's book *Reklaim*, he presents a harrowingly beautiful world, one filled with deep and complex characters struggling against the all-consuming threat of war. Coursing through *Reklaim*'s rich, sometimes hypnotic prose are Italian-coded characters traveling through settings that both feel and appear Italian. Our interview with Mr. Ardire covered topics of Italian-American identity, as well as his Nonna's history as a small child surviving the ravages of World War II, and how these unique experiences heavily influenced *Reklaim*. It was an extremely interesting interview to be a part of, and many of the Italian-American values Mr. Ardire is extracting to form *Reklaim*'s moral themes resonated deeply

with my own.

Without further ado, may I present Amici Della Cultura: Episode 2...

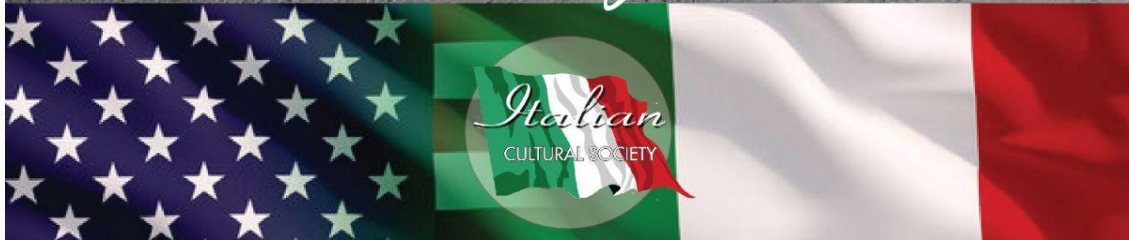
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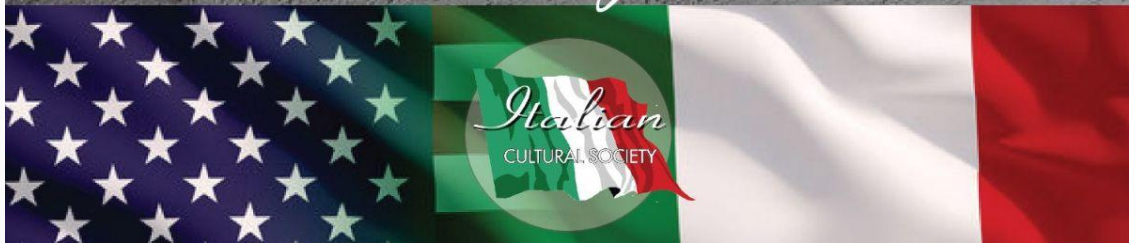


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PH: 916.482.5900

EM: italy1@surewest.net

www.italiancenter.net

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

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

[MAKE A DONATION in Honor or Memory of a Loved One](#)



Check out the Italian Cultural Society Website for the latest information about the Italian Center and Society Events:

- Italian Language Classes
- Society events and cultural programs
- Italian folk dance troupes
- Sunday "Sacramento, Italian Style" radio show
- Italian American exhibits at the Italian Center
- All ICS Newsletters, past and current
- Articles on the history and heritage of Italian America
- Advocacy Initiatives for the Italian Community

[CLICK TO VISIT www.italiancenter.net](http://www.italiancenter.net)

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is sent to your mailbox every
JANUARY, MARCH and NOVEMBER.**

Other notices are sent randomly
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