



NEWSLETTER

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Mar/Apr 2021

Our Mission

The mission of the Italian American Cultural Center of Iowa is to promote, preserve and provide education about all aspects of the rich Italian-American culture to the Des Moines metropolitan area and the State of Iowa.

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A Message From The President

by Paolo Bartesaghi

Ciao a tutti!
Hello to all of you!

Are you all keeping warm? This winter has really put us to the test and I'm just as anxious as everybody else for warmer weather and a vaccine.

The Board of the Italian American Cultural Center, with the help of many volunteers, is currently busy moving into their new headquarters, The Butler Mansion, located at 2633 Fleur Drive in Des Moines.

This former private residence was built between 1935 and 1937 by its then owner, Earl Butler, and his architect, George Kraetsch, who was a Des Moines native. Butler was an engineer who had lived in Des Moines for about 30 years and his vision for his residence was the desire of the most modern and functional house. He and Kraetsch both decided on an architectural style known at the time as Streamlined Moderne, a late version of art deco but extremely practical in nature.

This style emerged in the 1930s and was inspired by aerodynamic design emphasizing curved forms, long horizontal lines, flat roofs, chrome-plated hardware, and even nautical elements at times. It was often used in buildings relating to transportation such as bus and train stations and, industrially, in railroad locomotives, telephones, buses, and even appliances such as toasters, thus giving the impression of sleekness and modernity. One example of this that everybody knows is the Emerald City used in the 1939 movie classic "The Wizard of Oz".



Butler and Kraetsch wanted durability and practicality to be the forefront for the home, so they used reinforced concrete for the main structure and metal-framed double glass windows. Butler had read that 45% of all household accidents occurred on stairs, so he decided to incorporate a ramp system that went from the basement all the way up to its third-floor sunroom. A first-floor dining room featured lights that could be dimmed to accent the attire of the guest of honor and the house had a three-car garage with doors controlled by the blinking of car lights. Another interesting fact is that Butler was a pilot and his son, Edward, was manager with United Airlines in Des Moines. At the time the mansion was built, it was situated at one of the highest points in the city, so Butler installed a searchlight in the third-floor sunroom so that he could help planes find their way to the airport during bad weather.

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We Reflect and Remember

Nicholas Samuel Romano
Winona Frances Beltrame
Neal Smith
Gloria Louise Gazzo Sullivan
Paul Joseph Leto

Change of Address

Beginning March 23, 2021
our new address is:
2633 Fleur Drive
Des Moines IA 50321

Find more information about our
events at www.iaccofia.org,
facebook and Eventbrite

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www.siadm.com

Società Vittoria Italiana
www.vittorialodge.com

Italian-American Women of IA
www.italianamericanwomenofia.com

Italian Folk Dancers

Grant Supporters



Around The Center

by Patricia Civitate

How do you say goodbye to an old friend? I will be the first to say it isn't the easiest thing to do. But sometimes the day comes when it becomes necessary.

The year was 1989 and I was introduced to an old building that was to become the Italian American Cultural Center of Iowa. This old building soon became a new and dear friend. I was excited as I realized that there were numerous people, not only of our Italian-American community but others from around the Des Moines metropolitan area and the state of Iowa, who would join our circle of friends.

The board of governors knew that there was much work to be done before they could open their doors to the public. There were ceilings to be lowered, new lighting to be installed, furnaces to replace and an alarm system to be updated. The area chosen to become the museum was a large room with only four walls. Believe it or not, it had previously been a golf driving range. Our very energetic board scrubbed floors and painted new walls that had been built to house our displays. It wasn't long before we became a destination point for people to bring their out-of-town families and friends to enjoy. Buses also brought tourists to tour our museum.

And we cannot forget the many cooking and language classes, as well as genealogy research and folk dancing, that took place at the Center. Other memories include Dinners With Culture, Las Vegas Nites, 70's Dance, Santa Lucia and St. Joseph Altar celebrations, Heritage Month and Columbus Day dinners – some with dances! – and the Children's Day Camps.



The generosity of our immigrant families, who have shared numerous artifacts and memories "of the old world", has been amazing. Our present building is bulging at the seams and space for properly displaying items has become limited. The time had come to move on.

Presently, volunteers are busy recording and packing the contents of the museum. Boxes that are securely taped are labeled on the inside and on the outside to identify their contents. Our kitchen cupboards are filled with an assortment of dishes, glasses and dinner ware. There are pots and pans of all sizes as well as towels, aprons, and cleaning supplies. The list is endless and includes tables and chairs of all sizes. And we can't forget all the equipment needed for presenting our beautiful St. Joseph altar each year.

In a few weeks, it will be time to move on and say goodbyes. From all of us who have enjoyed your presence in our lives let me say, "Thank you, dear friend, you have served us well." As for me, our association has been a labor of love!



A Message To Our Italian Families

From the Italian-American Cultural Center of Iowa
2633 Fleur Drive
Des Moines IA 50321

The Italian-American Cultural Center of Iowa Fundraising Committee is beginning preparation for the entire state to join in to not only raise money, but to showcase our Italian Heritage at our new location in the Butler Mansion on Fleur Drive, Des Moines, Iowa, which is renowned as The Gateway To The City.

We are reaching out to every Italian family. We are asking for your help. We need to know you, your family heritage and how you can help us make this the best center in the Midwest and country. We need your help to find all Italians in your community and across the state.

We have a planning committee of many working on countless ideas to showcase our forefathers - how and why they came here, what jobs they had, what they brought to this state, and the legacy they left behind. We will have a curator helping to set up the museum, a director for the center, volunteers to show everyone around, an event planner (two event rooms available), outside bocce ball, a vineyard, library, coffee and lunch shop, a garden, educational center, art studio and more. Can you imagine coming to the Center and watching a tailor making clothes, walking inside a coal mine, stomping grapes, a grocery store with all Italian products, or maybe sitting on the deck enjoying the city view while sipping a cappuccino or eating a sandwich made with home-grown Italian herbs and produce? We are exploring many ideas to make this exciting!

We need your help to bring this project to fruition. Gather your ancestry information, pick an area you might like to sponsor, (we will offer naming rights for families). It would be wonderful to recognize every Italian family on the walls for giving to the Center in honor of their forefathers. Every family is important to this project no matter what you can give. We are all in this together!



If you are interested in submitting family tree information, please call
Kathy Foggia at 515-490-2957 or email at foggia@iaccofia.org.

If you would like to offer a monetary donation, please complete the
attached Campaign Pledge Form.

If you are considering a sponsorship or naming a room or area, please call,
Loretta Tursi Sieman at 515-689-4451 or email at lorettasieman@gmail.com.

Se stiamo assieme, possiamo farcela.
If we work together, we can do it.

Our Fundraising Committee
Paul Bognanno, Pat Schneider, Luca Berrone, Loretta Sieman

2020-2022 Campaign Pledge Form

Italian-American Cultural Center of Iowa

2633 Fleur Drive

Des Moines IA 50321

I/We are proud to join others in supporting the Campaign for the Italian-American Cultural Center of Iowa's new building. I/We intend to support the Campaign with a total donation of \$_____.

Please choose one of the following payment methods:

- ☐ Enclosed is donation paid in full
- ☐ Check (payable to Italian American Cultural Center of Iowa)
 - ☐ Credit Card
 - ☐ Discover
 - ☐ Mastercard
 - ☐ Visa

Account # _____ Exp Date ____ / ____ Security Code _____

Name as appears on card (please print) _____ Zip Code _____

- ☐ I/We would like to make payments over ____ years (up to two) beginning: _____, 20____
- Payments to be made: ☐ Quarterly ☐ Semi-Annually ☐ Annually ☐ Other _____
- ☐ I/We would like to make a gift of securities/stock. (You will receive a call regarding transfer procedures).

For recognition, please choose one of the following:

- ☐ List my/our name(s) as _____
- ☐ I/We would like to remain anonymous
- ☐ This gift is made in honor/memory (circle one) of _____
- ☐ Please notify: _____
- Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Please complete ALL of the following information:

Name (please print) _____

Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Thank you for your donation to the Italian American Cultural Center of Iowa.

For questions, please contact Susan DeFazio at 515-868-3068 or DeFazio@iaccofia.org

All contributions are tax deductible as allowed by law.

The 28-room mansion occupied 13,000 square feet and was named a Des Moines historic landmark in 1989. In 1937, American Magazine named the Butler Mansion as “the world’s most modern house” and it is one of the best lasting monuments to the Streamlined Moderne style. There have been three additions to the mansion, thus, arriving at 44,000 square feet in all.

In Italy, an architectural style known as Italian Rationalism was growing, which closely resembled Streamlined Moderne. Due to the time period, Italian Rationalism is often associated with fascism. The name Rationalism is retroactively applied to a movement in architecture that came about during the Age of Enlightenment (more specifically, Neoclassicism), arguing that architecture’s intellectual base is primarily in science, emphasizing geometric forms and ideal proportions.

Rational Architecture (Italian: *Architettura razionale*) thrived in Italy from the 1920s to the 1940s. In 1926, a group of young architects – Sebastiano Larco, Guido Frette, Carlo Enrico Rava, Adalberto Libera, Luigi Figini, Gino Pollini, and Giuseppe Terragni, founded the so-called Gruppo 7, publishing their manifesto in the magazine *Rassegna Italiana*. Their declared intent was to strike a middle ground between the classicism of the Novecento Italiano movement and the industrially inspired architecture of Futurism. Their “note” declared:

“The hallmark of the earlier avant-garde was a contrived impetus and a vain, destructive fury, mingling good and bad elements: the hallmark of today’s youth is a desire for lucidity and wisdom...This must be clear...we do not intend to break with tradition...The new architecture, the true architecture, should be the result of a close association between logic and rationality.”

One of the first rationalist buildings was the Palazzo Gualino in Turin, built for the financier Riccardo Gualino by the architects Gino Levi-Montalcini and Giuseppe Pagano. Gruppo 7 mounted three exhibitions between 1926 and 1931, and the movement constituted itself as an official body, the Movimento Italiano per l’Architettura Razionale (MIAR), in 1930. Exemplary works include Giuseppe Terragni’s Casa del Fascio in Como (1932–36) and Novocomum (1929) in Como.

Novocomum is the first rationalist work ever realized in Como by Giuseppe Terragni (1929). It’s a four-floor palace which is characterized by two rounded balconies topped by a right-angled third.



Palazzo Gualino
Turin, Italy



Novocomum
Como, Italy



Casa del Fascio
Como, Italy

I hope I have given you some interesting information on the new headquarters for the Italian American Cultural Center of Iowa and how it relates to other architectural achievements throughout the world. Thank you as always for your support of the Italian American Cultural Center of Iowa as we spread Italian culture throughout the community.



la Festa della Donna

The 8th of March is International Women's Day or, as it's more commonly called in Italy, *la Festa della Donna*, where the importance of women is celebrated by the giving and receiving of the mimosa blossom.

Historians cannot agree when and why the act of giving mimosa began, but there is documented evidence that men in Rome on March 8, 1946, gave the fragrant flowers to their wives, mothers, sisters and daughters as a sign of love and appreciation. Nowadays, women also hand the flowers to other women as a sign of solidarity.

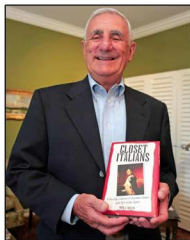
Mimosa (*Acacia Dealbata*), also known as the Silver Wattle, was first introduced into Europe from south-eastern Australia in 1820 and, being a fast growing shrub, it spread rapidly.

Prior to the Second World War, celebrations commemorating International Women's Day happened on various days within the month of March. However, in 1945, the Union of Italian Women voted to fix the date annually on March 8. Their reason for this was to commemorate two separate events that occurred outside of Italy. The first was the strike by women garment workers in New York on March 8, 1857, which, two years later, resulted in the formation of the United States' first women's union. The second event was the 'bread and peace' strike by Russian women on March 8, 1917.

Some feminist movements complain that the day has become too commercial and has lost its political ideology. Most people would argue in favour of this official day when women can come together and celebrate their gender, welcoming the men in their lives offering them a sweet smelling mimosa.

In Our Library

Have you heard of these famous people: Genaro Louis Vitaliano, Bernadette Lazzara, Alicia Augello Cook? Maybe you'll recognize them by their other names: Jerry Vale, Bernadette Peters and Alicia Keys.



Closet Italians, by Nick J. Mileti, is an interesting collection of famous Italians with non-Italian names. The short stories of these Italians are included with their Italian names and the names they later chose. Entries are arranged by the centuries of birth, going back to those born prior to the 1400s. Names are listed by centuries in the table of contents for easy reference.

The prologue of this book gives information about the reason the author wrote it. He includes the names of some famous Italians who changed their names to different Italian names, so they couldn't be included in the main section of the book but he wanted to include in some way. He also tells of some of the contributions of Italians that may have been credited to other nationalities.

Listed below are some examples of the people included in this book.

Cristoforo Colombo

Lewis Pessano

Antonio Pestritto

Anthony Dominick Benedetto

Gary Kent Marscharelli

Christopher Columbus

Buttercup Dickerson

Tony Pastor

Tony Bennett

Gary Marshall

explorer

Major League baseball player

band leader

singer

writer, actor, director, producer

As I did, you may find some surprising facts in this book. For example, the reason some of these Italians felt the need to change their names. Without a doubt, learning about the contributions of these people who may not carry Italian names will make you proud of being Italian.

Vignole

This delicious Italian vegetable stew, packed with gorgeous greens, celebrates the arrival of spring.

Ingredients:

- 4 small artichokes
- 3/4 lb podded fresh baby broad beans
- 6 baby leeks, cut into 2" lengths
- 1/2 lb spinach
- 1 sm chopped white onion
- 8 oz chicken stock
- 3/4 lb podded fresh peas
- 4 thick slices prosciutto
- 1 T chopped mint leaves
- 1 T chopped flat-leaf parsley

Put artichokes into a pot of cold salted water, bring to a boil & cook 10 min. Drain, allow to cool, then peel back the outer leaves to



reach the pale tender ones and remove the choke. Tear the hearts into quarters. Blanch the broad beans for a minute in salted water, remove & drain. Blanch the leeks for 3-4 minutes until tender, and the spinach until just wilted. Sauté the onion very gently until soft, add the chicken stock and the peas and bring to a boil. Lay the slices of prosciutto over the top and simmer gently for about 10 minutes until the peas are cooked and soft. Tear the leeks into strips and stir them into the peas with the spinach, the artichokes and the broad beans. Bring back to simmering point and let all the vegetables stew together very slowly for about 10 minutes.

Season with salt and pepper, stir in chopped herbs & serve.



Springtime in Italy

A visit to Italy during the wisteria, or *glicine* as it is locally known, season will make feel like you have found the secret door to a Fairy Tale World.

The sweet-smelling flower bursts into shades of lavender and indigo and will stop you in your tracks. Perfect clusters of purple blooms drape themselves across houses and fences, porches and balconies. It is so beautiful to see that you feel like taking a walk through a town or a village just to admire the blooming wisterias gracefully framing windows and climbing high up peeling walls.

Vegetable gardens burst into bloom when spring comes around and eating in Italy enters a sort of extended party phase that lasts through the fall. Delicate vegetables like asparagus, zucchini flowers, and spring peas are classic spring fare. Many more fruits also start to come into season, most notably, strawberries, which flavor everything from tarts to gelato, and are also delicious all on their own. Spring marks the end of heavy root dishes and the start of lighter meals, prepared fresh and with care.

March is a transition month, when the snow begins to melt and the fields are planted with spring and summer produce. The star of March is the humble leek. Though you can find leeks cooked in dozens of different ways, leek and potato soup, maybe flavored with some pancetta, is the perfect dish to celebrate this spring onion.

April is for artichokes – a beloved Italian vegetable that takes menus and markets by storm this month and is only around for the shortest of seasons. You can try them in soups, savory pies or risottos, but perhaps the best way to celebrate the artichoke is with *carciofi alla guida*, the Jewish-Roman way:



Tracing a Foundling

By Michael Lomagno

I would like to share an experience I had a few months ago while visiting in Italy. Some of us have ancestors who were "Trovatelli", foundlings. Usually, this means the end of the line in our genealogical research based on documents.

For many years I thought of Vincenzia Aprilini, (great great great grandmother) as only an abandoned baby who perhaps had a miserable childhood in an orphanage. However, I was wrong. She was baptized in the Duomo di Prato and only spent the 1st 4 days of her life at the Ospedale della Misericordia e Dolce di Prato (Hospital of the Misfortunate of Prato) before being whisked away to the countryside, where she lived with her wet nurse for the first year and a half of her life. What is amazing about the story is that this wet nurse, Maddalena Mazzoni, was the great grandmother of my great grandmother, who had given birth a year before, in 1824, to her son, Bartolomeo Incrocci. Her milk brother, "fratello di latte", was her future husband! It was there in the cradle where two babies formed a bond and would marry one day. Instead of being transferred to a different family after the milking stopped, Vincenzia was raised and cared for by Maddalena's sister, Rosa, her *balia asciutta* ("dry nurse").



What the documents indicate is that special requests were made by the local priest to the Ospedale to keep Vincenzia within the family. What was truly special and humbling was to hold the medallion that was around Vincenzia's neck when she was given up. As you can see from the photos, the charm is chipped off. This is deliberate because, if the birth mother ever came back to reclaim the child, she would have the missing piece to establish identity. Usually this never happened, but it is heartening to know that the mother of Vincenzia did not abandon her baby with ease of heart. There was hope. There was love.

From my visit to the Archivio di Stato di Prato, I was able to view the correspondence from the priests to the hospital as well as the ledger that was kept for the payments made for the 1st 14 years of Vincenzia's life. I, of course, was also able to hold the precious medallion, that I also discovered was a Bolognese coin minted during the period of Pope Pius VI's reign (1775-1799),

when the papal states controlled a large section of territory. It was common to pierce the coin and use it as a charm around the neck of a child. Therefore, if you have such an ancestor on your tree, I suggest you contact the State Archive of that province or even visit if you have the opportunity. Hopefully, they will have such documents that can bring a clear picture and even a story beyond a name on your family tree. Our ancestors are saying "Eccomi" (here I am). We just need to be lucky enough to hear them.

The Ruota Wheel was established to drop off a child that was being given up anonymously. This wheel has been boarded over, but the wheel or base would have been open to the outside for the baby to be left on, then turned to the inside of the building (hospital, church) where the child was safe inside.

Sometimes the child was left with a piece of cloth or something to identify it later if the parent changed their mind and wanted the child back.



April 1825

A child was introduced in this city, asserted by Caterina Colzi of our district, a coin minus a part, which was placed in the usual place of signs, found hanging from her neck threaded in black cord. The Creature was given to the Sacred Source in the Cathedral and she was given the name Vincenzia Aprilini.

This story was taken from the Italian Genealogy Facebook group that I am a member of. You can get helpful ideas on how to tackle your genealogical brick walls in Facebook groups. There are genealogy Facebook groups for different Regions in Italy, Italy in general, Southern Italy, and even Italian DNA groups. You might not hit the jackpot like Michael Lomagno did, but you can find information that will make you feel closer to your ancestors, and in turn maybe understand more about yourself.

-Kathy Foggia

Things You Can Only Experience in Italy

Continued from last month



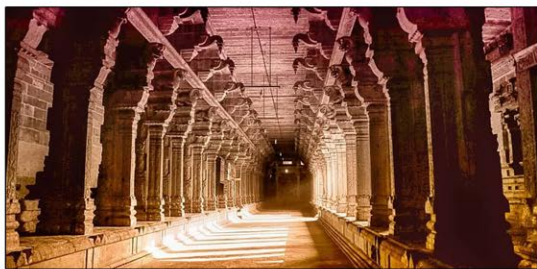
Explore Italy's very own Atlantis ... Baia was, once upon a time, a very prosperous Roman city located in the Gulf of Naples. The city served as a resort for people that want to enjoy self-indulgence and it was considered to be the Sin City of the Roman Empire. That's why many people believe God decided to punish the residents and many locals refer to it as the Roman Sodom. Today, the sunken city has become a famous archeological park, providing visitors with a unique experience of exploring an underwater city.



The first underwater farm in the world ... A few years ago, a team of Italian scuba divers from Liguria started growing tomatoes, strawberries, and basil. They had a vision of a vegetable garden underwater, inside a transparent balloon filled with air. Today, this vegetable garden is the first and largest underwater farm, housing more than 700 plants. If you want to learn more about it, Google Nemo's garden.



The Sword in the Stone- it actually exists ... This sword in the stone isn't only a Disney movie. It's actually real and you can visit it in the Italian town of Chiusdino and not in Camelot. A knight and hermit by the name of Galgano Guidotti supposedly had two visions in which Archangel Michael and the 12 apostles spoke to him. Both of his visions happened on the same spot in which he marked with a cross and place a sword in the ground. The legend says the ground around the sword hardened instantly and no one could pull it out. The sword has been around since the 12th century and Guidotti



Visit the world's first Catacombs ... Beneath the streets of the eternal city, you'll find the oldest catacombs on our planet. In Rome, there are six Jewish, and 40 Christian catacombs. The followers of Christ used the catacombs to bury the dead, while the Pagans burned their bodies. It's really fascinating to walk around these underground passages and imagine how these people felt when their religion was banned and they had to hide underground to practice it.

Continued next month

Attention Newsletter Subscribers

We welcome ideas for stories from our readers. Please contact one of our staff members to submit an idea. We are also reaching out to the community for writers. If you have a flair for writing and would like to volunteer, please let us know.

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March 1 Mar/Apr issue

May 1 May/Jun Issue
July 1 Jul/ Aug issue

September 1 Sep/Oct issue
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Gruppo Il Trattenimento Italiano

The members of both our Ragazzi (children's) group and the adult group are excited about the move to a new home for the Cultural Center. We have packed our bags and are ready to go. It was amazing to realize how much we really have. In addition to the variety of regional clothing we have for each of us there are the costumes for the Holy Family and angels that the children wear every year for the "Tupa Tupa" pageant during the St. Joseph altar celebration. We also have numerous musical instruments and CD's as well as boxes of props such as baskets, fruit and hats that we use.

Because of the corona virus we have not been able to meet for a year. We are also sad that the IFafa conference was cancelled last year? We always look forward to renewing old friendships with other dancers from around the country. It was especially disappointing that it was necessary to cancel our Heritage Festival last year. This year is doubtful also. We love sharing our regional Italian dances with audiences. It is always fun when our audiences take the floor with us to dance the Tarantella Napolitana.

Besides missing the fun of practicing we also have not been able to have any bake sales. One of our favorite cookies, besides the Quanti (Wandas) are the love knots. We would like to share our recipe for them with you. The recipe we use is the one Mrs. "C" got from Lucille Giacomuzzi Quinn. We think it's the best. Bake and enjoy.

LOVE KNOTS

8 eggs	3 tsp. vanilla
1 cup oil	½ tsp. salt
1 ½ cup sugar	6 cups flour
6 tsp. lemon extract	6 tsp. baking powder

Preheat oven to 375o

In a large bowl beat eggs, add oil and beat well. Mix well after each addition the salt, sugar and extracts. Add 4 cups flour and 4 tsp baking powder, again mixing well. Add additional flour and baking powder until dough is of rolling consistency. Set aside, cover dough and let rest for 10-15 minutes.

Roll dough into pencil thin pieces 6" or 7" in length. Tie into bows. Bake for 8-10 minutes. I bake for 4-5 minutes and then rotate trays on the shelves. Bake another 4-5 minutes. You want your cookies to be just lightly brown – do not over bake. Place cookies on a rack to cool. After taking cookies from the oven you could place a towel over the cookies and they will continue cooking. When cool frost with powder sugar frosting.

To make cookies in advance unfrosted cookies can be placed in air tight container and placed in the freezer. When ready to frost lay cookies out for just a few minutes and then frost.

Buon Appetito