



NOV/DEC 2023

ITALIAN-AMERICAN CULTURAL CENTER OF IOWA

NEWSLETTER

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A Message From The President

by Paolo Bartesaghi

E l'autunno e' arrivato
And Fall has arrived.

During my last trip to Italy, I had the privilege of showcasing the town of Lecco to a group of clients and friends.

After many years, I was able to revisit the summer residence of the famed Italian author Alessandro Manzoni in my native town of Lecco on Lake Como. He is the author of the famous *I Promessi Sposi*, a book that I read as a middle school student.

I Promessi Sposi is an Italian historical novel by Manzoni, first published in 1827 in three volumes, then significantly revised and rewritten until the definitive version was published between 1840 and 1842. It has been called the most famous and widely read novel in the Italian language.



Set in the Duchy of Milan in 1628, during the years of Spanish rule, the novel is also noted for its extraordinary description of the plague that struck Milan around 1630. The novel deals with a variety of themes, for example: the illusory nature of political power and the inherent injustice of any legal system; the range of character among the Christian clergy from the cowardice of the parish priest Don Abbondio to the heroic sanctity of others (the friar Padre Cristoforo, the cardinal Federico Borromeo); and the unwavering strength of love (the relationship between Renzo and Lucia, and their struggle to finally meet again and be married). The novel is renowned for offering keen insights into the meanderings of the human mind.

Manzoni hatched the basis for his novel in 1821 when he read a 1627 Italian edict that specified penalties for any priest who refused to perform a marriage when requested to do so. In the early 19th century, there was still controversy as to what form the standard literary language of Italy should take. Manzoni was firmly in favor of the dialect of Florence and, as he himself put it, after "washing his clothes in the Arno [the river passing through Florence]", he revised the novel's language for its republication in 1842, cleansing it of many Lombard regionalisms. The original name of one of the protagonists, Fermo, was changed for the same reason to Lorenzo.

continued



We Reflect & Remember

Colleen Breheny
Nick S. Cardamon
John Kelly
Joanne (Cordaro) Liston
Rose C. (Aiello) Pigneri
Ralph Renda
Rena Vanni

Friends of The Center

Societa' Vittoria Italiana
www.vittorialodge.com

Society of Italian Americans
www.siadm.com

Italian-American Women of IA
www.italianamericanwomenofiowa.com

Italian Folk Dancers

Grant Supporters



Our First Indoor Holiday Market

Join us for two days of shopping and holiday festivities.



You can purchase VIP access for December 1, from 5:00pm - 9:00pm and get specialized service from our vendors while sipping on prosecco wine and tasting delicious appetizers in a holiday atmosphere.

On December 2, the Holiday Market will be open to the general public between 9:00am and 5:00pm.

Over 15 individual vendors will be present both days and happy to help you with their items. Some of the vendors present include:

Sapori – flavored oils

Box53 – one of a kind gift baskets for every occasion

Cooking with Alessandra – cooking accessories and tips on Italian cooking

Califall Studio – handmade fiber art

Mary Patricia – fine art and design

T'S – Home Baked Goods

and so many more!!

What better way to get into the holiday spirit!!

For more information on this event, please visit our web site at www.iaccofia.org



Celebrate The Holidays "Italian Style"

Dolci Festivi

over 2-dozen homemade
Italian cookies

Ready for Pickup
December 23rd
9:00AM - 11:00AM
2633 Fleur Dr.
DSM IA 50321

Contact:
Michelle 515-868-7435
murrow@iaccofia.org

Order By Dec 8

Qty ____ @ \$40 per box = \$ ____

Name: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

IACC of Iowa and AICS sign Protocol of Understanding

By Andrea Barutta

On October 20, 2023, Paolo Bartesaghi, President of the Italian American Cultural Center of Iowa (IACC) and Mario Pongan, President of the Associazione Italiana Sport & Cultura Italian Association for Sport and Culture (AICS) signed a Protocol of Understanding with which the two groups agree to promote sport and cultural activities in Iowa and in Italy.

With more than 1 million members and a presence throughout Italy, AICS has a long history of collaboration with our community and this Protocol of Understanding has the goal to renew and strengthen this bond. First contacts started in the early 2000's when a group of riders supported by AICS visited Iowa to ride RAGBRAI.

Paolo Bartesaghi says "I am very happy to have signed this agreement. It will allow us to bring new and exciting activities to our constituents and make our ties with Italy even stronger."

You can visit www.iaccfia.org and www.aics.it for additional information.



About the IACC of Iowa: 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.



About AICS: AICS is a non-profit organization founded in 1962 whose activities embrace social and cultural aspects as different as solidarity, sustainable tourism and the protection of the environment.

Villa La Petraia

Villa La Petraia was the property of the Brunelleschis from 1364, passing through various passages and then ending up in the properties of the Medici. Cosimo purchased it to donate it to his son, Cardinal Ferdinando in 1568. It was in 1609 that Don Lorenzo de' Medici enriched it with a cycle of frescoes, called the Medici Fasti. Let's face it, the Medici have left their mark on the history of not only Tuscany, but all of Italy. Without them, I daresay, perhaps, we would not have had the Renaissance we know.

The cycle of frescoes was entrusted to Baldassarre Franceschini, known as Il Volterrano, who, at the suggestion of Pier Francesco Rinuccini, followed a scheme free from chronological succession. The subject is the glories of the family, their exploits, seen through the history of Rome.

As has often happened, the heirs lose interest and the deterioration begins, which ends with the arrival of the new Lorena family. Subsequently it was owned by the Savoy family. Once again the decline, the new ownership, the State that took over in 1919 does not deny it, furnishings are dispersed and the property is monetized by dividing up the immense park. Recovery since 1984. Today it is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, a fitting reward for the beauty of the Medici.



In Our Library

In 1985, Leon J. Radomile, tired of seeing Italian culture trivialized into pizza and spaghetti or Italians thought of as stereotypical Mafia mobsters, created the Italian Heritage Game. This game was patterned after the then popular Trivial Pursuit game. The questions were about the history and culture of Italy.



Years later, when asked to bring back the game, Leon decided that his ideas would make a good book and Heritage Italian-American Style was conceived. This book, in a bilingual edition, is available in our library. It contains 1,776 questions about Italian culture and tradition. These are divided into sections such as Sports and Food and Music and Entertainment. Answers to the questions can be found in another section of the book.

An added bonus can be found in the section titled Italian Dessert Recipes. There are also sections called What Columbus Started and Internet Website Directories containing a treasury of interesting information.

Whether you read this book in English or Italian, you'll find many reasons to increase your pride in your Italian-American heritage.

Example: This Tuscan city is famous the world over for its olive oil trade and the imposing walls that surround the city. Identify this city.

Don't know the answer?
Check out this book and find out.

Around The Center

By: Patricia Civitate

The Italian-American Cultural Center was extremely busy during Italian Heritage month this year.

To begin the celebration, Mayor TM Franklin Cownie proclaimed October as Italian Heritage Month in Des Moines. He read the proclamation at the October City Council meeting and then presented it to Cultural Center President Paolo Bartesaghi.

The 48th annual Heritage Month dinner took place at the Cultural Center on October 8th. Honorees receiving the Outstanding Citizen Award were John P. Sarcone and George Formaro. Guest speaker for the evening was Jerry Talerico. The meal was catered by Scornovacca's Ristorante.

The following day, an observance was held at the Cultural Center. George Formaro was the guest speaker and shared his passion for baking with the group. He recalled memories of the early Italian owned restaurants and told numerous stories about them. Jerry Talarico was present and joined in the conversation about the past. Members of some of the families of bakers and restaurant owners were in the audience and added their stories as well.

Italian language classes for both beginner and advanced students began Wednesday, October 4th, and will be held every Wednesday throughout October and November. Because of the Thanksgiving holiday the classes that week will be held Tuesday, November 21st.

On Saturday, October 21st, a class was held on how to obtain Italian Dual Citizenship, taught by Kathy Foggia and Linda Henderson. Linda, who has obtained her dual citizenship, shared the rules to see if individuals qualified. She spoke about the tools she used to navigate the process, as well as the benefits, the costs involved and the length of time it takes to obtain Italian citizenship and passport between the United States and Italy.

Another favorite, the Hands on Ravioli Class, will be held Saturday, November 4th. Instructors will be Rose Russo and Teresa Russo-Dyer.

Looking Ahead -

Events that will be sponsored at the Cultural Center during December to complete a busy 2023 will include a Holiday Market December 1st and 2nd and the Santa Lucia Celebration December 10th. Christmas Cookie Boxes will also be available for purchase.

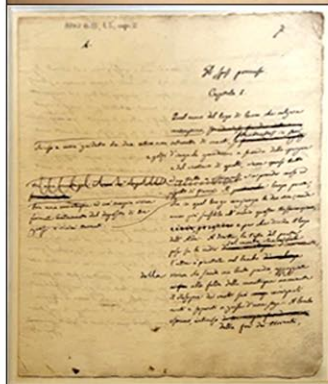
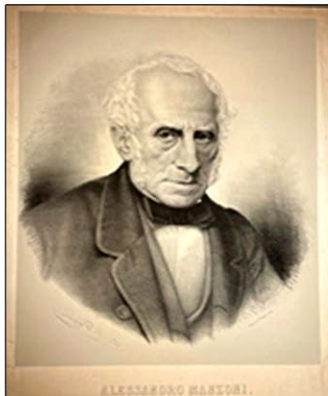
Detailed information can be found on our webpage at www.iaccofia.org as well as in this issue of the NEWSLETTER.

Scan to visit our web site for the latest news & events.



2023
Heritage Month Kickoff





The novel is commonly described as "the most widely read work in the Italian language." It became a model for subsequent Italian literary fiction. Scholar Sergio Pacifici states that no other Italian literary work, with the exception of the Divine Comedy, "has been the object of more intense scrutiny or more intense scholarship."

Many Italians believe that the novel is not fully appreciated abroad. In Italy, the novel is considered a true masterpiece of world literature and a basis for the modern Italian language, and as such is widely studied in Italian secondary schools. Many expressions, quotes and names from the novel are still commonly used in Italian, such as Perpetua (meaning a priest's house worker) or Questo matrimonio non s'ha da fare ("This marriage is not to be performed", used ironically).

The novel is not only about love and power: the great questions about evil, about innocents suffering, are the underlying theme of the book. The chapters 31–34, about the famine and the plague, are a powerful picture of material and moral devastation. Manzoni does not offer simple answers but leaves those questions open for the reader to meditate on. The main idea, proposed throughout the novel, is that, against the many injustices that they suffer in their life, the poor can only hope, at best, in a small anticipation of the divine justice, which can be expected in its entirety only in the afterlife: therefore, life should be lived with faith and endurance, in the expectation of a reward in the afterlife.

In the book, one thing that people remember is also a small fisherman's boat that is typical of the Lake. Since the 16th century, the fishermen of Lake Como have used a particular type of boat to move through the waves of the lake. The very flat hull of the boat is necessary to approach the shore without the risk of damage. But the most recognizable feature of this Lake Como traditional boat is certainly the semicircular wooden structure above it. It was used for fixing a tent to cover fishermen from the elements during fishing trips which in ancient times could last for several days.

This Lake Como traditional boat could be moved with the wind, thanks to a sail, or more typically with oars. It was entirely made of wood. Although it was born as a work boat in the nineteenth century, it was modified to be used for pleasure boating and passenger transport.



The original name for Lucia is "batell", which literally means "boat", but from 1840 people started to call it Lucia. This was due to the popularity of Alessandro Manzoni's book *The Betrothed*. In one of the most famous chapters of Italian literature, Lucia has to flee from her home and while sailing with her "batell" towards Monza, she looks back to the mountains and to her village and she thinks over the "Farewell to the Mountains". This reflection became so famous and important that the boat on which the character meditated it started to be called with the name of the character herself: Lucia.

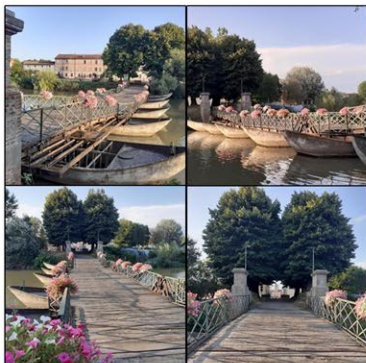
I hope you found this information interesting. As always, thank you for your continued support of the Italian-American Cultural Center of Iowa as we spread the Italian culture throughout the community.

Boat Bridge of Commessaggio

This historic and evocative Boat Bridge of Commessaggio in the province of Mantova was built in 1776 to replace the previous bridge built by Vespasiano Gonzaga in 1583. That bridge had to be destroyed as it was considered unsafe.

What we see today was built by the citizens of Commessaggio, who contributed both in terms of manual labor and expenditure for the purchase of materials.

In front of the bridge, which crosses the Navarolo canal, stands the massive 16th century Terrazzo di Vespasiano. Over the years it has only undergone one real recovery operation in the mid-1990s. Every year, however, it is subjected to maintenance, paid equally by the Municipalities of Commessaggio and Sabbioneta. The bridge, between Commessaggio and the Sabbioneta hamlet of Commessaggio Inferiore, is 50% owned by the two towns.



Volunteer Work Day

On September 9, volunteers, armed with cleaning supplies and tools, visited the Cultural Center. Their goal was to prepare the Center for the up-coming Heritage Month activities. They worked hard and achieved that goal. Rooms were dusted and vacuumed. Bathrooms were scrubbed and cleaned. The courtyard was weeded and put in order. Things were ready for the Heritage Month Dinner, Memorial Observance, Language Classes, Dual Citizen Class and Holiday Market. It was quite an effort.

Thanks to our volunteers Jim and Lesa Blasco, Pat Civitate, Ricki Harkin, Linda Henderson, Gracy Kirkman, Chip and Michelle Murrow, Therese Riordan, and Jon Turner.



Feast Of The Seven Fishes: An Italian-American Christmas Eve Legacy

Courtesy of paesana.com

Christmas is the time of traditions—like the Italian-American Feast of the Seven Fishes. Like most other holidays Italian-Americans have a way of making the Christmas season all about food.



There's one meal in particular that is perhaps the most celebrated and legendary Italian-American meal of the calendar year. The Feast of the Seven Fishes is the annual Christmas Eve vigil and epic seafood feast that has grown into the most beloved meal of the year in Italian-American households. Steeped in tradition, the Feast of the Seven Fishes is the centerpiece meal of the entire holiday season.

The origin of the Feast can be traced back to southern Italy, the area that is surrounded by such bountiful coastline that seafood has been a massive part of the population's diet for generations.

The number "seven" wasn't attached to the feast until long after Italian immigrants arrived in America with their cultural feast in tow.

If you asked seven different Italian-American families, there's a good chance you'll get seven different answers as to what dishes are a must have during the feast. Mainly, it's all about tradition—some modern day Italian-Americans have memories of their grandma butchering live eels in the kitchen sink, while others can still smell the pot of shellfish-laden pasta sauce simmering for hours on the stovetop.

Taking tradition and memory into account, here are the most common fish, shellfish, and entire dishes you might find at an Italian-American Christmas Eve gathering:

Baked Clams - There definitely must be a few snack-sized, appetizer-type dishes in this feast, and baked clams are the ideal entry point into the seafood extravaganza.

Fried Smelts - Larger smelts can be butterflied, with the flesh pulling easily off those tiny fish bones. But the real joy is with the tiny smelts that can be eaten whole—bones and all!

Baccalá - A salted cod-type white fish, baccalá is about as close to sacred as a holiday dish can get. It's traditionally prepared by first soaking it in the kitchen sink for multiple nights leading up to the Christmas Eve feast.

Scungilli - This conch can be applied in multiple ways during your Feast of the Seven Fishes. The two most popular ways are in a chilled seafood salad or as an ingredient in a bubbling cauldron of seafood sauce.

Mussels - A massive pot of mussels is as inextricably linked to Christmas as Santa Claus himself. Whether prepared as part of a cioppino-style seafood stew or delicately dressed with a light tomato sauce or steamed with white wine, garlic, herbs, and butter, mussels can be a communal experience that perfectly encapsulates a loud, boisterous holiday dinner scene.

Calamari - Calamari consists of the rings and tentacles of squid. Use calamari either in a chilled seafood salad or fry it to crispy perfection and serve with a side of marinara sauce for dipping. Either way, don't be afraid of the tentacles — arguably the best and most desired part of this seafood.

Loebster - The most decadent of all seafood options, lobster is regal enough to be the centerpiece of your Feast of the Seven Fishes. The buttery and supple flesh can be enjoyed straight from the steamed shell, as part of the aforementioned cioppino-style seafood stew, prepared as the classically piquant lobster fra diavolo or stuffed with a mix of breadcrumbs, spices, crabmeat, and other ingredients for a truly indulgent take on the ultimate Christmas main course.

Dual Citizenship Class



On Saturday, October 22, Linda Henderson taught a class at the Cultural Center on obtaining Italian dual citizenship. 17 participants were in attendance. She discussed the requirements, cost involved and benefits once you are an Italian citizen and gave great information on the forms needed and documents required.

Thank you Linda for sharing your experience and knowledge with the group.



VITTORIA LODGE AUXILIARY

"I'm so glad I live in a world where there are Octobers."

L.M. Montgomery

Thank you to the Italian American Women of Iowa for hosting the fall brunch at the cultural center. Good conversation, delicious food and the Italian card game combined to make this an enjoyable morning.

We have been busy preparing for the annual "Christmas at the Vittoria Lodge" event on November 4th. With 22 vendors available you are guaranteed to get a good start on your Christmas shopping.

It was decided that the November memorial mass will be postponed until June. Please read the upcoming newsletters for additional details.

We are keeping with the traditional Christmas party for the kids and that special visit from Santa. This will be held on December 10th starting at 1:00 at the Vittoria Lodge. All small children and grandchildren are welcome.

Happy Fall to All-

Deb Fleishman
President, Vittoria Lodge Auxiliary

Società Vittoria Italiana

Next Men's November 19th @ 2:00 pm

MONTHLY MEETING: Haven't been to monthly lodge meeting in a while? Please mark your calendar and join us! We invite fresh ideas and involvement.

POKER NIGHT: The men are hosting a Poker Game on Friday November 10 starting at 7pm and is open to all men and Auxiliary members who want to play cards games, wager a little money and have fun socializing with fellow members.

KITCHEN UPDATE: The kitchen is done and open again. We installed a new oven hood system, replaced the old stove with a newer one and replaced ceiling panels. Check it out at the next meeting in November.

MEN'S CLEAN UP DAY: Thanks to all the members who participated in clean-up day at the Lodge Sunday October 15th. Also, special thanks to Roger Fiori for coordinating lunch for the members.

PRAYER READING: As part of the funeral protocol, the member's (men or women) family will need to ask if they want the ceremony prayer read at the visitation or cemetery.

TONINI FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP: If you are a member of the Lodge or Auxiliary and you have a son, grandson, daughter or granddaughter attending Dowling Catholic High School for the upcoming 2023-24 school year, the lodge is sponsoring a scholarship through the Tonini Family Scholarship program. Contact Randy Prati at 515-321-8941 for more information.

LODGE WEBSITE: We will be updating our lodge website very soon. Check us out at <http://vittorialodge.com>.

ORDERING LODGE APPAREL: Squire Hutcheson has made arrangements with Adventure in Advertising offering Lodge & Auxiliary Members through a secure website to purchase apparel (polo, T-shirts) with the Lodge logo on it. To obtain a user ID or for more information please contact Squire at 515-577-4283 or email him at squire@squireweb.net.

HAPPY NOVEMBER BIRTHDAY WISHES TO OUR MEMBERS: Michael Marcketti, Robert Battani Jr., Joseph Tollari, Sante Medici, Chad A. Johnson, Brian Patton, Joseph A. Ballantini, Randy Palandri, James Albright, Roger Fiori, Dominick Forneris, Daniel L. DeCarlo, Donald Frank Lamberti, Richard Cervetti **Buon Compleanno!**

HAPPY DECEMBER BIRTHDAY WISHES TO OUR MEMBERS: Robert Danti, Anthony P. Natale, Eric Bryan, Anthony Forneris, Vannuccio Rossi, Michael Ryner, Barry J. Romitti, Rick Isolini, John Vacco, Mario Tumea, John Cerretti **Buon Compleanno!**

MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

November 4th – Auxiliary Craft Show

November 19th – Lunch Social @ 12:30pm; Meeting @ 2:00pm

December 10th – Children's Christmas Party 1:00 to 3:00pm

December 17th – Lunch Social @ 12:30pm; Meeting @ 2:00pm

January 21st – Lunch Social @ 12:30pm; Meeting @ 2:00pm