

Italian-American CULTURAL CENTER OF IOWA

NEWSLETTER
MAR/APR 2024



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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Paolo Bartesaghi

Anche San Valentino e' passato e Pasqua arrivera' tra poco. Quindi auguro a tutti Voi un periodo di riflessione in questo periodo pasquale.

Also, Valentine's Day has passed and Easter is arriving shortly. Therefore, I wish all of you a time for reflection during the time of Lent.

During the past year, many people have asked me about the different regions and provinces of Italy. And with this President's Corner, I would like to explain to you a little bit about the Italian regions.

Many know that Italy is comprised of 20 regions. However, most do not know that not every region has the same authority and power. 15 of the 20 regions have ordinary statute status and 5 (Aosta Valley, Friuli/Venezia Giulia, Trentino-Alto Adige, Sardinia, and Sicily) are considered autonomous regions with special statutes and powers.

Let's start at the beginning. The idea of dividing Italy into regions originated with Augustus, the first Roman emperor. He partitioned continental Italy into eleven zones, referred to first by numbers rather than names. These regions did not have administrative authority but served for census-taking and tax collection purposes. This didn't really change until the end of World War II, when the Kingdom of Italy became the Republic of Italy. In 1948, these regions were officially established and were granted political autonomy by the new Italian Constitution. The original draft comprised the Salento region (which was eventually included in Apulia); Friuli and Venezia Giulia were separate regions; and Basilicata was named Lucania. Abruzzo and Molise were identified as separate regions in the first draft but were later merged into Abruzzo e Molise in the final version of 1948 before being separated again in 1963. It was not until 1970 that the 20 modern regions held their first elections and assumed self-governing authority.



Each Region consists of Municipalities, Provinces, and Metropolitan Cities and has an elected parliament and a regional government which is elected by the citizens of each region. Regions are like a US State, and the Provinces correspond to counties, with each county having their County Seat.



continued

WE REFLECT & REMEMBER

Nicholas Anthony Iaria
Theresa Grace Ausilio Riccelli
Dale McCargar
Ann Aiello
Doris Jean Tometich
Samuel Rizzuti

FRIENDS OF THE CENTER

Societa' Vittoria Italiana
www.vittorialodge.com

Society of Italian Americans
www.siadm.com

Italian-American Women of IA
www.italianamericanwomenofia.com

Italian Folk Dancers

GRANT SUPPORTERS



AROUND THE CENTER

by Patricia Civitate



Due to remodeling and renovation at the Italian-American Cultural Center of Iowa, our observance of the feast of St. Joseph will be the same as last year.

Keeping in the spirit, we would like to continue the practice of sharing what we have with those who are in need. In order to do this, we are planning the following activities:

Food items will be collected and donated to the St. Joseph Emergency Family Center, Bidwell Riverside Center, and the Food Bank of Iowa. Donations may be brought to the: North parking lot of the Cultural Center, 2663 Fleur Drive on Sunday, March 17th, from 2:00pm-5:00 pm.

Non-perishable items, as well as fruits and vegetables, will be accepted. Monetary donations are also welcomed.

St. Joseph mementos will be distributed to those visiting the North parking lot of the Center. These will include a St. Joseph holy card, a St. Joseph medal, and a "lucky" fava bean, along with a story explaining the tradition.

In Italy, Father's Day is celebrated on the Feast of St. Joseph, in honor of St. Joseph, considered the foster father of Jesus. A Father's Day prayer card will also be included with the mementos.

Vegetable frittata will be prepared and delivered to the Catholic Worker House. If you would like to help in making these, please call Pat at 515-250-8804.

Coming Soon:

Apr 26	Wine Tasting	Jun 29	Cooking Class
May 8	Pop-up Dinner	Jul 13	Bread Making
May 18	Cooking Class	Jul 29	Day Camp begins
Jun 1	Cooking Class	Oct 16	Pop-up Dinner
Jun 15	Cooking Class		

Look for more information on these and other events on www.iaccofia.org.

LA BEFANA VISITS THE CENTER



Party-goers participated in making bracelets and rainbows and decorated cookies with cookie-making kits.



The children then re-enacted the story of La Befana as told by Tomie DePaola. They assumed the parts of the characters and provided dialog and sound effects. Afterwards, they shared snacks and waited to see if La Befana would make a visit.

La Befana came sweeping in, bringing gift bags for each participant. The children were eager to open their gift bags to see what La Befana had brought. They seemed pleased with their gifts.

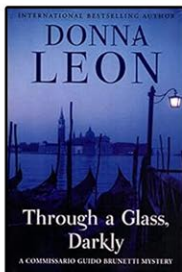
A big "thank you" to all the women who worked to make this a fun experience for the children.

This party was co-sponsored by the Center and the Italian American Women of Iowa.

IN OUR LIBRARY

Something's wrong in the Veneto Region and it's up to Commissario Guido Brunetti to solve the mystery.

This book, "Through a Glass Darkly", by international author Donna Leon, traces the journey of Brunetti, who is called in to help a friend arrested during an environmental protest. This involvement leads to more questions and a murder which Brunetti hopes to solve. He also becomes involved in the political life at the time, which only adds to the number of questions he has as he uncovers the clues.



The book sprinkles Italian language throughout the story, which can cause confusion for those who do not speak it. However, I'll bet most readers can figure out the meanings of these words as I did. These words add to the "flavor" of the story and remind the reader that they are in Italy.

Readers who have been to the Veneto Region will recognize the places mentioned in the book. The most prominent of these is the island of Murano where the murder occurs. Readers may also learn a little about glass blowing during their reading, as Murano is noted for its glassware creations.

There are lots of clues to "who done it" but, even with these, readers may have trouble deciding who the murderer is and how and why the victim was killed. This isn't explained until almost the last page of the book. If this book sounds intriguing to you, you can find it for check-out in the fiction area of our library.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT *continued*

As I stated earlier, 15 regions have ordinary statutes created in 1970 and approved by their regional councils. The other 5 regions are considered autonomous with special statutes. This allows them some legislative, administrative, and financial powers to a varying extent, depending on their specific statute. These regions were granted this status based on cultural differences and also to protect linguistic minorities. In addition, the government wanted to prevent them from potentially seceding or being taken away from Italy after the defeat in WWII.

In the coming months, there will be many things going on at the Cultural Center and beyond. Therefore, please stay tuned for further information regarding events and activities and the wonderful future we are in the process of building for all of you and the generations to come, as well as the Metro community and state of Iowa.



Autonomous regions are red and the 15 ordinary regions are gray.

*Alla prossima.
Until next time.*

VILLA PONIATOWSKI

by Paolo Bartesaghi

In 1570, Cardinal Pierdonato Cesi, Sr., of the dukes of Acquasparta, purchased land on Via Flaminia, adjacent to Villa Giulia, which Julius III had built a few decades earlier. In 1591, Montaigne indicated Villa Cesi, whose park extended onto the hill, as one of the ten most beautiful in the city.

Cesi's cousin, Duke Federico Cesi II, who in 1603 had founded the Accademia dei Lincei for the study of science, married Isabella Salviati and they had a daughter, Olimpia. In 1630, following the death of Federico, the Academy, which Galileo Galilei had also joined, was forced to disband, only to restart at the end of the 19th century. Olimpia Cesi married, first, Ludovico Lante della Rovere and, then, Paolo Sforza, in 1642. From this second marriage, Federico Sforza was born, who began the Sforza Cesarini dynasty in 1672.

The Cesi dynasty continued with Giovanni, Federico's brother. Giovanni Cesi's nephew, Giuseppe, married Giacinta dei Conti di Poli, sister of Pope Innocent XIII. The Cesi family had, in addition to this villa, several important palaces in Rome, in Acquasparta, in San Polo de Cavalieri and in Civitella Cesi.



In 1695, Isabella Cesi, last of the dynasty, married Francesco Ruspoli, prince of Cerveteri, and brought him the family assets as a dowry. Having large capital, Francesco Ruspoli and his wife Isabella purchased in 1713, from Michelangelo Caetani, the immense palace on Via del Corso in Rome, which is still part of the family today, as well as the palace of Cerveteri and the castle of Vignanello.

They had nine children, five of whom married members of the main Roman families: Chigi, Conti, Orsini, Giustiniani and Altieri. The part of Villa Cesi that reached the Porta del Popolo was sold to the Altamps. The other part, to the north, after various changes, was purchased in 1792 by the Polish prince Stanislaus Poniatowski (1754-1833), nephew of the last king of Poland, his namesake, who had the two buildings enlarged by Giuseppe Valadier. One building is adjacent to Villa Giulia and the other, on Via Flaminia, became the Casina Vagnuzzi in 1825 (now home to the Philharmonic).

After 1870 the flat part became an artisan and industrial area, while the hill was purchased by the Alsatian nobleman Alfred Stroh in 1879 to dedicate to artists' studios. Almost the entire hill was then left, in 1927 by Alfred Stroh, to France, while in 1988, the noble Casino of his villa was acquired by the Italian State and connected to the Etruscan Museum (with a passage into French territory).



ITALY'S EXTRAVAGANT CHOCOLATE EASTER EGGS

Chocolate bunnies are the traditional Easter treat in the United States, but Italians prefer gifting chocolate Easter eggs - giant, extravagantly decorated or wrapped, and often holding a treat inside.

The Italian Cultural Foundation at Casa Belvedere presents some fun facts about these amazing sweet confections:

Eggs are very symbolic, and not just at Easter. Ancient Romans would bury an egg painted red to encourage a good growing season. Eggs also signify rebirth after the cold winter months. Chocolate eggs became popular in Italy after World War II, when people wanted to celebrate Easter and chocolate was an inexpensive treat.

Unlike small foil-wrapped chocolate eggs in the United States, Italian chocolate eggs are hollow, and can be very large. In the weeks before Easter, shop windows and coffee bars display elaborate eggs, typically wrapped in fancy foil or soft fabrics like silk and tulle. Italian supermarkets create large displays of hollow chocolate eggs targeted specifically to young children, wrapped in bright colors, with small toys inside.

The finest chocolate eggs are made by Italy's artisanal chocolatiers and pasticcerias, using fine white, milk or dark chocolates, and sometimes flavored with hazelnuts. The fanciest chocolate eggs are elaborately hand-decorated with colored chocolate or royal icing. Sizes range from very small, all the way up to gigantic; the largest can cost hundreds of euros.

Most Italian Easter eggs feature a small trinket or toy inside, or pieces of the sweet confection torrone. The label will include the word *sorprese* (surprises). Local pasticcerias will sometimes let customers bring their own special gifts to hide inside chocolate eggs, including engagement rings, car keys, airline tickets, and more.

In 2004, a shopping center in Turin made a chocolate Easter egg more than 18' tall and weighing 5,500 pounds.



In 2012, an Italian chocolatier presented Pope Benedict XVI with a chocolate Easter egg almost 7' tall and weighing about 550 pounds.





THE CLOISTERS OF SAINT BARNABAS IN MILAN

by Paolo Bortesaghi

There are places of unprecedented power, hidden in unthinkable corners. Behind the court, a few steps from the Rotonda della Besana, there are four cloisters of a former 15th century Franciscan convent, which do not participate in the same counting of minutes, hours and days as man.

These are the Chiostri di San Barnaba. There is no doubt that, when you cross the threshold, all the noises of the city suddenly stop and some believe that, by some strange magic, you are no longer even in Milan, as often happens in all the courtyards of the Franciscan and Poor Clare convents around the world.

The fish cloister (Chiostro dei Pesci) is the largest of the four, and owes its name to a stone tank that has always existed there and in which fish have always lived.

An immense weeping beech tree protects much of the garden with its foliage.

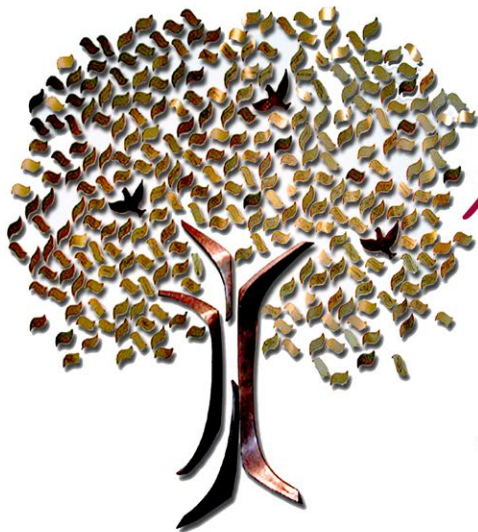
In the wisteria cloister (Chiostro dei Glicini) there is a very strong feeling of having arrived in another space and another time, which is clearly what really happened when crossing the plane tree garden (Giardino dei Platani), perhaps the most beautiful courtyard in all of Milan.

The garden is also called the garden of silence, immersed in nature, surrounded by tall plants and fruit trees, almost unbelievable just a few steps from the court.

In 1466, this area was donated by the Sforza family to a Portuguese nobleman who had abandoned his sumptuous and ephemeral existence to become a Franciscan. In 1805, the complex was requisitioned by Napoleon and was deconsecrated, like many religious buildings in Northern Italy, becoming first a stable, then a warehouse, a hospital and, finally, a reformatory. This is why I would advise you to be wary of those who believe they are more powerful than places and can conquer and subjugate them.

Today the convent is the headquarters of the Humanitarian Society, founded at the end of the nineteenth century by Prospero Moses Loria, a society that promotes the ability of workers to improve their economic conditions through professional training and education. I advise everyone to retrace the biography of this incredible philanthropist who, in his will, donated his assets of around ten million lire, around 31 million euros today, to promote his initiative.





Our Family Tree

Our Family Tree wall sculpture stands as a testament to our rich Italian heritage.

It serves as a visual reminder of our interconnections and the strength we derive from our roots, inspiring us to cherish our history while fostering a sense of belonging and continuity for generations to come.

Line 1 _____

Line 2 _____

Line 3 _____

Your \$200 tax-deductible donation purchases one leaf with 3 lines of inscription.

Actual Size



Name _____

Address _____ City ST ZIP _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Italian-American

CULTURAL CENTER OF IOWA

PO BOX 4994 · DES MOINES · IOWA · 50305

VITTORIA LODGE AUXILIARY

We are looking forward to our upcoming activities. On March 17th at 11:00 we will gather at the lodge to make Wandas for our bake sale at the famous cavatelli dinner which will be held on March 24th. Our wandas have sold out quickly in the past so stop by early to purchase these delicious Italian goodies. Please note that our scheduled meeting on the 17th will begin immediately after the wanda making, which could be before the usual start time of 2:00.

Plans for the **annual dinner** for all Vittoria Lodge members will be on **Saturday, June 8th** with appetizers beginning at **5:00** followed by dinner and entertainment. During this event we will be commemorating our dear deceased members who have passed between October 2022-June 1st 2024. This will take the place of the Memorial Mass which has previously always been held in November. **Reservations are required** for the evening and can be made by calling Lesa Blasco at 515-306-3730 between May 1st and June 1st.

Our membership fees have increased to \$25. These must be paid, in advance, if you plan on attending the June dinner. You can pay by venmo to julie-jennings-29 OR by mailing a check/cash to Julie Jennings, 620 NW 67th Pl, Des Moines, IA 50313. If you have sent in your money but were unaware of the price increase, please send in the remaining difference of \$10.

The sauce contest, which was previously canceled due to inclement weather, has been rescheduled for Sunday, April 7th at noon. Please bring your prepared entry in a crock pot ready for the judging. This will be followed by a pasta lunch featuring all entries. Even if you choose not to enter, plan on attending and enjoying the lunch with fellow members.

Please plan on attending these events.

Deb Fleishman
President, Vittoria Lodge Auxiliary

SAVE THE DATE!



Societa' Vittoria Italiana

Next Men's Meeting March 17th @ 2:00 pm

CAVATELLI DINNER: Cavatelli and sausage dinner will be held on Sunday, March 24th at the lodge hall serving from 11:00am until 4:00pm. Carry-out option available. Adult \$10.00 and children under 12 \$5.00. Proceeds go to Vittoria Lodge Scholarship Fund.

POKER NIGHT: The men are hosting a Poker Game on Friday April 5th starting at 6pm 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.

SPAGHETTI SAUCE CONTEST: Bring your favorite homemade sauce to the Lodge on Sunday April 14th to enter the first annual sauce contest starting at Noon. Judging will start at 1pm. The Lodge will supply the spaghetti. Everyone is welcome to attend.

MEMBERSHIP DUES: Please get your membership dues sent in. If you did not receive your membership statement, please contact Squire at 515-577-4283 or email him at squire@squireweb.net

NEWSLETTER: Member newsletter subscription, who receive a print newsletter paid by the Lodge, has expired. Members can either sign up to receive an electronic version of the newsletter on the Italian American Cultural Center of Iowa website or contact the Center to order a subscription to continue receiving a print version.

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS: The Lodge and Auxiliary Memberships will be sponsoring its annual scholarship program for eligible students planning to attend college in the Fall of 2024 and related to a Lodge or Auxiliary member. Included in your newsletter is a scholarship application. The application is due June 1, 2024. The recipients of the scholarship awards will be at the June Dinner (June 8, 2024).

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 in the Fall of 2024, the lodge is sponsoring a scholarship through the Tonini Family Scholarship program. Contact Randy Prati at 515-321-8941 for more information.

HAPPY MARCH BIRTHDAY WISHES TO OUR MEMBERS: Alan Magnani, James Forneris, Aldo Forneris, Bruno Lenzini, Edward Green, Jim Tazzioli, Doriano Rossi, Fr. John Bertogli, Daniel Battani, John Cosenza, James Cerfogli, Larry Biondi, and Jake Jennings **Buon Compleanno!**

HAPPY APRIL BIRTHDAY WISHES TO OUR MEMBERS: Richard Ballantini, Logan Ward, Robert Jr. Chiappano, Brett Stefani, David Stefani, Frank Lenzini, Dustin Stefani, John Casey, Fr. Mike Amadeo, Randy Fontanini, Michael Casey, Ray Cervetti, Robert Chesi, Richard Prati, Fr. Chris Fontanini, and Bruno Andreini **Buon Compleanno!**

MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

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

March 24th – Cavatelli Dinner Serving from 11:00am to 4:00pm

April 5th – Poker Night @ 6pm

April 14th – Spaghetti Sauce Contest @ Noon

April 21st – Lodge Clean Up Day 8:00am; Lunch Social @ Noon; Joint Trustees Meeting @1pm;

Lodge Meeting @ 2:00pm



Societa Vittoria Italiana

Vittoria Lodge
P. O. Box 1212
Ankeny, Iowa 50021-0975

Scholarship Application

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Age _____

Male _____ Female _____

City, State, Zip _____

College Student ID # _____

Name of Lodge or Auxiliary Member Sponsor _____

Relationship to Member _____

Graduation date if in High School _____

School (Plan on) attending _____

COMPLETE mailing address of school / department the check will be sent to:

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Deadline is JUNE 1

No Applications will be accepted at the June dinner

This is the ONLY Official form to be used for 2024 applications.

If the college like, U of I, requires any additional paperwork to be submitted with the check, you are to submit the completely form filled out with your application.

Please submit photo with application

(please include applicant's name on back of photo)

Send Applications to:

Vittoria Lodge
P. O. Box 1212
Ankeny, Iowa 50021-0975

ITALIAN AMERICAN WOMEN OF IOWA (IAWI)

JANUARY/FEBRUARY
NEWSLETTER

Welcome our new executive Board!

President- Angie Funaro, **Vice President-** Teresa Russo-Dyer, **Secretary-** Brooke Murrow, **Treasurer-** Rose Russo, **Sgt. At Arms-** Gloria Stefani, **Auditor-** Jennie Dooley, **Membership-** TBA, **Greeter-** Lisa Cruchelow, **Cheer & Sympathy-** Susan Witt, **Social Chair-** Nina Punelli



Monthly Meetings are held on the **4th Tuesday of the month!**

Membership Dues:

If you would like to join IAWI it is \$25 for members under 65, \$15 for seniors 65-74, and 75 and older are Life Members and have free membership. If you have any questions or need a membership form, please contact Teresa Russo at (515) 371-9280 or visit our website ItalianAmericanWomenofIowa.com

Cheer and Sympathy:

If you would like a card sent to one of our members, contact Susan Witt at (321) 239-6002

Stay tuned for upcoming events and volunteer opportunities!

Important Dates:

- March 23rd - Easter Egg Hunt at Cultural Center - 9:00 am
- March 30th - Easter Bread Sales