



Casa Italiana of Dutchess County dba “The Italian Center”

A Cultural Organization Organized in 1928 to Promote, Preserve, and Celebrate Our Italian, and Italian American, History, Heritage, Culture, and Traditions

1195 Route 376, Wappingers Falls, NY 12590 USA Phone (845) 454-1492 (Leave Message)

[Facebook](#) | [Website](#) | [Membership](#) | [Member Portal](#) | [Contact](#)

JULY 2026 NEWSLETTER

Bar Opens for Members and their Guests on Bocce Nights (Mondays 6:00-8PM)
Come! Enjoy Your Club! Watch the Matches, a Game On TV, and/or Otherwise Socialize!

DINNER RESERVATIONS REQUIRED! Contact Ernie Bruno 845-594-5700 (hpsinger@optonline.net) by the Sunday before the dinners.

Website, Facebook, and Instagram: Have something to put in those or feel something missing?

Send material or thoughts to [President](#) or [Secretary](#) (president@theitaliancenter.com and/or secretary@theitaliancenter.com)!

Members' Meeting – Tuesday, July 7th, 2026

Cocktail hour (Cash Bar) starts 5:00PM - Dinner begins 6:00PM - Business 7:00PM - Dinner cost is \$30.
ATTENDEES ONLY MEMBERS IN GOOD STANDING - Paid Dues/Not in Suspension – Reservation Necessary!
Member Quorum necessary to conduct business. Please attend at 7:00PM even if you cannot participate in the dinner.

Menu - Meal Prepared by Chef Billy Schiffer

Antipasto:	Pomodori, Carote Tagliuzzate, Cetriolo e Olive - Salad with Tomatoes, Shredded Carrots, Cucumber, Olives
Primo:	Rigatoni in un Ragu e Rigatoni in a Ragu - Linguine con Aglio e Olio Linguini with Garlic and Oil
Secondo:	Pollo Francese con Broccoli, Aglio e Olio - Chicken Francese with Broccoli, Garlic, and Oil
Dolce:	Scelta dello chef - Chef's choice and Coffee

Provincial Night - Tuesday, July 21st, 2026

Honoring Lombardia and Bergamo. Cash Bar 6:00PM - Dinner 7:00PM

Hosted by the IC Board – **THE BOARD WILL PERFORM THEY ALWAYS HAVE!**

Don't miss it! It will be una serata **surprisingly good!** SIGN-UP SOON!

Reservation Necessary! Contact Ernie Bruno (845-594-5700 or hpsinger@optonline.net) - \$40 Member / \$45 Guest

Menu - Meal Prepared by Chef Billy Schiffer – Still in Flux BUT Be Assured of This

Antipasto:	Mouth watering
Primo:	Better than your mamma's
Secondo:	Unbelievable
Dolce:	Like you went to heaven

*Al Tripoli's June 16th Emilia Romagna/Reggio Emilia Provincial Night Was Unforgettably Good!
Al, from Calabria (South Italy), brought honor to Emilia Romagna (North)! A grand evening – thanks to Al/his team!*



It's the pastas that makes the meal and Tom, Lou, Jeff made sure they were SUPER GOOD!

And 2nd VP Vince made sure the water was better than Acqua Panna

And the full house MARVELED at such an elegant, satisfying, and filling meal before them – and how the service and attention was so spot on! Many said, "I never knew the Emiliani could outdo the Calabresi puttin-on a meal!?"

Huum... maybe it was because the brother (in blue shirt) that hosted this fine evening is Calabrese! Al, his team, staff did a SUPER JOB! Al gave THANKS TO ALL!

IS JULY WE'LL CELEBRATE THE REGIONE LOMBARDIA AND BERGAMO



The name of the Region derives from the medieval Latin Longobardia, Land of the Lombards, a Germanic population that invaded the Italian peninsula in ancient times. The Lombard king Alboin entered Pavia in 568 AD and made Pavia the capital of his kingdom. Even today, much of this regione settentrionale (Northern Italy) resembles Germanic Switzerland, certainly in topography, but also in “flavor”. Its “tempo” is far different than that in the Meridionale (Southern Italy). In previous newsletters we explored Lombardia mostly concentrating on its geography



Gli Stemmi delle Lombardia e Provincia di Bergamo

and economic importance. Here is a [link to that exploration](#). Herein, I'd like to explore the **Provincia Lombardiana di Bergamo**.

Bergamo was invaded and sacked many times; by Celts, by the Huns (Attila), by the French, etc. Gli stemmi (the banners) of the Regione Lombardia and the Provincia Bergamo reflect the various “barbaric” and “noble families” that ruled over the area. So historically speaking, it has many interesting tales of battles, court intrigue, governments, etc. to explore. Interesting stories but herein let's explore Bergamo's artistic and cultural contributions. Bergamo (BG) – city in the Provincia di Bergamo - is one of the most prestigious cities of art/music in Italy. It gave us world renown painters, sculptors, composers, and explorers!

For instance, Giovan Battista Moroni, one of the most important portraitists of the 16th century, worked and died in Bergamo. His work is featured Worldwide today in popular museums, and an authenticated Moroni portrait sells easily for \$300K-\$800K.

It is the birthplace of Giacomo Manzoni, the famous 20th Century sculptor of the busts of cardinals (clergy), with a unique expressionistic slant. His bronze statues are sold Worldwide and today for \$10K-\$100 depending on the size. Manzoni devoted himself to sculpture, but was a master of drawings, etchings and paintings, often centered on female models, painters, female dancers and lovers. The theme of lovers is recurring in the artist's work.

It is the city of libertarian Giacomo Costantino Beltrami (1779–1855) a jurist, author, and adventurous American explorer who authored an important English-Sioux dictionary. Beltrami embodies the restless romantic hero. Accused of conspiring against the Papal States he fled to France, England, then America, where he influenced America's frontier history significantly.

It is the city of Harlequin. The famous mask of the commedia dell'arte is from Bergamo de sota (Lower Bergamo) - although some consider him a peasant from the Brembana Valley - and Brighella è de sura (Upper Bergamo).

And if you go to Bergamo, you will find affordable tasty cuisine rusticana; homestyle dishes like [polenta taragna \(see earlier article\)](#), and casonsei (stuffed pasta made from breadcrumbs, cheese, and meats, that sometimes is sweetened with raisins and amaretti biscuits). And you cannot miss classic bergamasque veal and chestnut dishes biligocc and barole.

And if you go early Spring, prepare to community dance on the 3rd Sunday of Lent that celebrates the “Burning of the Old Woman”! **And** do not go to bed in Bergamo (BG) before 10 p.m. because the Campanone (its civic tower) sounds its bells always at 10 p.m. 130 sharp times that will wake the dead (in ancient times the bells announced the closing of the city gates).

But get up early and climb the scorlazzini - the stairs that connect the lower city to the upper city - for exercise.

Ermanno Olmi shot his wonderful award-winning film "[The Tree of Clogs](#)", in Bergamo's Gallo-Italic dialect called Orobico. The Lombardian dialects and its spoken Italian are unique – [discussed in the linked newsletter article](#).

Bergamo (BG) is also a city that gave us Gaetano Donizetti, the world-famous 19th century composer. His “lyric operas” are characterized by majestic scenic structure and great melodic texture. They are categorized as “**The Tragic Opera**” Lucia di Lammermoor, based on a novel by Sir Walter Scott, its intense emotional drama and the chilling, iconic “mad scene” makes this opera a favorite. “**The Tudor Queens Trilogy**” Anna Bolena, Maria Stuarda, and Roberto Devereux (a powerful, emotionally charged drama about the Earl of Essex and his doomed relationship with Queen Elizabeth I). “**The Comic Operas**” L'elisir d'amore (love potion), Don Pasquale, and La fille du régiment (Daughter of the Regiment), a charming French opéra-comique famous for the tenor aria “**Ah! mes amis**,” which requires the tenor to hit nine high C's in one aria - [see & hear this AMAZING rendition](#).

Let's contrast “**Ah! mes amis**” with the more dramatic **famous tenor aria**, from L'elisir d'amore, “**Una furtiva lagrima**”-[hear here](#). Donizetti masterfully uses larghetto (slow broad tempo that indicates introspection/pensiveness). **Background:** peasant **Nemorino** (the tenor) is madly in love with **Adina** who attracts higher class suitors. A con artist sells him a love potion he uses to get Adina to requite his love. He has inherited a fortune, but he doesn't know it; some young women do though, and they flock to him. Though he **loves only Adina**, he is glad that the girls flocked to him; he thinks it invoked **jealousy in Adina that slightly exposed (una furtiva lagrima) her love for him**. He desperately wants that love to grow and **hopes the L'elisir d'amore totally kicks in soon else he will die from want of her total love**. In context of the story, [my semi-non-literal translation](#) of the aria “Una furtiva lagrima”:

“I see a clandestine tear in her eyes. Those festive young women now covet me, and it seems Adina is jealous. What more do I seek? Perhaps she really loves me! I see it, for a single instant! I feel her heartbeat; we sigh as one! It confounds me, this cannot be real! Heavens, one can die waiting for love! I don't ask for anything more than her love! How do I play this? What will increase nascent love? Shall I be indifferent? Shall I just wait for “L' Elisir d'amore” to kick in? Heavens, one can die waiting for love!”

PROVINCIAL NIGHTS ARE SPECIAL – INVITE FRIENDS AND FAMILY – FUN & FINE FOOD

Next Provincial Night July 21st, 2026. Honoring Lombardia/Bergamo - Hosted by IC Board

Region	Date	Province	Sponsor(s)	Region	Date	Province	Sponsor(s)
Calabria	20-Jan-26	Catanzaro	Pat Fasolino	Lombardia	21-Jul-26	Bergamo	TBD
Toscana	17-Feb-26	Firenze	Tom Viani	Sardegna	18-Aug-26	Cagliari	TBD
Campania	17-Mar-26	Napoli	Mancarella Bros.	Puglia	15-Sep-26	Bari	Frank LaManna
Liguria	21-Apr-26	Genova	Paul Waldbillig	Lazio	20-Oct-26	Latina	Tony Daniele
Sicilia	19-May-26	Tutte (all)	Giangrasso Family	Basilicata	17-Nov-26	Matera	Frank Marinaro
Emilia-Romagna	16-Jun-26	Reggio Emilia	Alberto Tripoli	No Provincial Night in December 2026 – Next 19 January 2027			



MUST WE REITERATE? PLEASE VOLUNTEER TO BE A PN SPONSOR!
 Sponsor any TBD (No Sponsor Yet) date! Honor its designated, or any open, regione!
 It's Fun, It's an Honor, It's Appreciated, It's Necessary for the Club's Viability!

Note: Regions Not Normally Duplicated in Same Year

<u>Region On Schedule</u>	<u>Logical Replacements Open</u>	<u>Sponsor</u>	<u>Date</u>
Lombardia	Friuli-Venezia Giulia Piemonte Trentino-Alto Adige Valle d'Aosta Veneto	TBD	21-Jul-26
Sardegna	Puglia Marche Molise Umbria	TBD	18-Aug-26

Italian roots? Use www.ancestry.com or www.italymondo.com to help you connect! Honor your antenati italiani via Provincial Night support!
 Also, [here is a link that shows how Italy's Regions \(States\) evolved!](#)

We need volunteers to help to assist with setup, serving, and cleanup! We also need sponsors to fill in the TBDs!
 Please contact Lou Piro at (845) 629-8905 or lgpiro@hotmail.com

Captain a Table, Fill It with Friends and Family, Volunteer to Entertain, Have Great Food and Good Cheer!



President's Letter

Fellow Brothers and Sisters,

I, for one, love this weather! Yeah, we can use a little more rain, but don't you love the warm days and cool nights? We have actually been turning off the air conditioning and opening the windows after the sun goes down. It has been great sleeping weather! Well, enjoy it while it lasts! Day time high in the high 90's and humidity in the 80's will be upon us very soon.

June Meeting Night dinner was prepared by Chef Billy with the assistance of Jeff Williams, Sal Polizzotto and John Casuli. Members enjoyed a tossed salad, followed by out two usual ragu and garlic and oil pasta. For dinner everyone enjoyed sliced roast beef and gravy with mashed potatoes and grave and a side of string beans. Carrot cake was for dessert. What a treat!

June Provincial Night was hosted by Al Tripoli with the region of Emilia-Romagna. Al designed a fabulous traditional Emilia-Romagna menu that 141 diners really enjoyed. We started with a Fresh mozzarella with pesto, arugula, artichokes, mortadella and balsamic glaze. The pasta course was fettuccine with Bolognese ragù with shavings of parmigiano cheese and tricolor tortellini with butter and sage sauce. The entrée was milk-braised pork loin with roasted potatoes and sauteed green beans. The pork was soooooo tender and juicy that you could cut it with a fork! To top off the meal we served a Emilia-Romagna classic Tiramisu! Preparing and serving this delicious meal were Chef Billy assisted by Sous Chef Tom Viani, Host Al Tripoli, Steve Tripoli and Jeff Williams.

None of these dinners would have been successful without our volunteers in the kitchen, that set up the dining room, take reservations and sell raffles. Jack Castelli, Lois Gaglione, Chris Sena, Paul Fortunato, and Irene Petro set up the dining room, Ernie Bruno handled reservations, Ray Pantaleo sold cards, Paul Waldbillig sold 50/50 tickets. It's volunteer effort like this that makes our events possible and profitable! Thank you all for your hard work!

If you are interested in getting tickets for the Saratoga bus trip you should get them as soon as possible! It's a great day! It includes round trip, luxury bus ride, to and from the track, admission, covered picnic area that is 30 feet from betting windows, track program and a delicious dinner at Delmonico's Italian Steakhouse on the way back. Pack a lunch, some snacks and beverages and bet on the ponies! Tickets are selling fast and once the bus is sold out, you missed your chance! Don't delay, sign up now!

The bar is open on Monday during the bocce league. Come on out, have a drink and enjoy watching the competition or just hang out inside in air-conditioned comfort and watch a sporting event on the TV.

Please keep our sick and ailing members in your prayers. Call or email me with any comments, questions or concerns 845-629-8905 – president@theitaliancenter.com.

I hope to see you around the club!

Fraternally yours,

Lou Piro, President

- [Please See Our Events below](#), visit [our Website](#) and [our Facebook](#), LIKE us, join our activities, and have some fun.
- [IWAGY Presents Wines of the Tyrrhenian Mainland and Islands Wednesday, July 15th, 2026, 6:30 pm](#) [July 15th, 2026, 6:30 pm @ IC](#)
- [Aug 9 Saratoga Racetrack](#) Ray Pantaleo, rayp520@aol.com, \$140pp, Includes Bus, Tented Picnic Area, Entrance/Program, Dinner @ Delmonicos
- [Anthony Comunale Memorial Golf Tournament](#) Monday, August 3, 2026 go to <https://charitygolftoday.com/event?e=28131&ce=c63e98>
- [Ray Pantaleo is planning a comedy show for October 10th.](#)
- [Ernie Bruno is going to do a big raffle right before the Christmas holidays.](#)
- [We once were a Lodge of the Sons of Italy: here is a little ITALIAN CENTER HISTORY.](#)
- [The NIDO site](#) that has Italian references and IC cultural stuff categorized for us (Links).

Special Business - Meeting Minutes Report (June 2026)



President (Lou Piro): We had a presence at the Wappingers Parade and received 12 interested applicants. Ray Pantaleo, Chris Sena, Lois Gaglione, Lester Runza, Carmine Melilli helped. Lester Runza brought his 1949 Firetruck. Angela Bumstead put together a flower arrangement for the lobby and plans to do it on a seasonal basis. We had an incident with a bear digging through our dumpster and doing some damage. The lid was smashed in and the chain link fence was bent all the way down. Lou has video of it. Vince and Lou cleaned up the mess of food from provincial night.

Chairperson of the Board (Ray Pantaleo): None

1st Vice President's Report (Franco Giangrasso): None

2nd Vice President's Report: [Volunteers Needed [Please See List Below](#).] (Vince Murray) We had the water sample done and it passed. Vince Murray and Franco Giangrasso are going to be moving stuff from the storage unit to the trailer and will be looking for volunteers.

Treasurer's Report (Tom DiGovanni) and Financial Secretary (Ron Knapp): Still in the Black.

Membership (Ron Knapp/Paul Waldbillig) Initiated: Paul Gatta (*Paul Waldbillig*), Dave Gatta (*Paul Waldbillig*), Gerard Musci (*Ray Pantaleo*), Susan Barone (*Tina Ruggiero*) Bruce Peterson (*Carmine Mellili*) David Tecchio (*Tom Martinelli*) Balloted **and Approved:** None **Read:** James Massetti (*Ray Pantaleo*)

Marketing/Advertising (TBD): [Editor: also see [Marketing Committee Report](#)]:

Wellness (Sal Polizzotto): Frank LaManna attended June 2nd meeting night and looks good.

Victor Bacile Scholarship (Paul Waldbillig): Paul said that the tournament committee is meeting often and welcomes sponsorships for tee signs and other things. They would love additional volunteers. [See Bacile Scholarship](#).

Planning Board (Tony Mancarella): Tony said the Progressive Ball will be the second Saturday of November and he needs volunteers.

Entertainment Committee (Ray Pantaleo) Ray thanked everyone that helped with the booth at the parade. August 9th is the Saratoga bus trip. The bus leaves from the Italian Center to the track. A tent area has been reserved. There is a dinner booked at Delmonicos Steakhouse. The price of \$140 per person includes all. October 10th is the comedy show. Ernie is going to do a big raffle right before the holidays.

OLD BUSINESS: Tony Mancarella wanted to know the status of people wanted to use the hall for members. Lou provided details. Hall rental is \$350 for four hours. You can come up as early as new to set up. Blue Fountain, Milanese Restaurant, Gino's Pizzeria, Landmark Grill, JD's Pub – The member contacts them independently. You can use the warming drawer to heat things up. You can talk to the caterer to provide flatware, silverware, and glassware. You can hire Italian Center waitstaff and can contact them yourselves. The bar is through the Italian Center, and the bartender is \$100 provided by the Italian Center. Open Bar – You pay for everything at member pricing Cash Bar – All attendees pay at non-member pricing. Hybrid Bar – The member pays for beer, wine, and soda at member pricing, and all attendees pay at non-member pricing for liquor.

NEW BUSINESS: None



Al Tripoli's June 16th Emilia Romagna/Reggio Emilia Provincial Night Was Unforgettably Good! We have no need to tell him "Devi andare a Canossa" ("You must go to Canossa"). Not only did Al and his team deliver as promised, but they also exceeded expectations with elegance, efficiency, taste, quality, and quantity! Bravo Al!

That saying is a way of telling someone "Get humble, supplicate yourself, admit your mistakes, and ask for forgiveness for your arrogance!" or to put it more colloquially "You messed up, get over yourself and admit it!". To me it is a "friendly" way of telling someone "You're full of ... better make it right."

Canossa is a castle town in the Province of Reggio Emilia. so, the cheeky reference is apropos to the Provincial Night, as an Italian lesson. It derives from a famous historical episode of the winter of 1077. The Holy Roman Emperor, Henry IV, was arguing with Pope Gregory VII. The Pope thought him way out of line and excommunicated the emperor. To not lose the throne, the emperor went to the Castle of Canossa (on the hills of the Reggio Emilia Apennines), where the Pope was a guest of the Countess Matilda. There, Henry IV remained for three days and three nights in penitent clothes, barefoot and in the cold, waiting to be received and forgiven.

2026 IS THE ITALIAN CENTER'S 5TH YEAR OF NEW ACTIVE LIFE IN ITS NEW DIGS!

LET'S MAKE IT A GRAND 5TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR!

The 5th anniversary's ancient theme was represented in wood, exemplifying strength, and durability, much like a tree.

Today, silver is more commonly used as its theme, as it also represents those things, and being precious and pure.

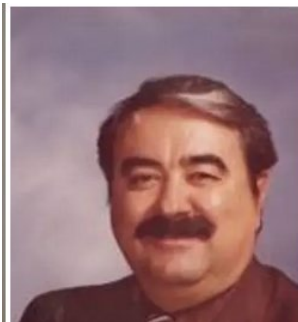
The Italian Center is and should be strong, durable, and precious to us. Also, it is and should be pure, i.e., true to its charter, unselfish, and dedicated to its mission. **La Casa Italiana mission, in a nutshell:**



To foster a cultural connection among members, to preserve Italian traditions, to educate others in such, and to enhance the image of Italian Americans in the community we serve. It brings together people of similar heritage and encourages them to help one another, and it provides resources, activities and events that foster camaraderie, understanding, and that bring some joy into our lives, and the lives of others.



The Italian Center has long stood as a symbol of Italian pride and an integral part of the Hudson River Valley landscape. When you join the Italian Center (La Casa Italiana), you take on its mission. Only we members can make our "Casa" great and true to its mission. In this 5th Anniversary of our NEW chapter of life, let us reflect on that 100+-year-old mission and rededicate ourselves to it.



Charles S. Barone

February 23, 1929 - October 15, 2014

Thinking of Our Monthly Meetings Brings to My Mind an Important Brother Who Kept Our Meetings Straight

"Annina", a symphonic march, was composed in 1925 by the famous Italian band composer Giovanni Orsomando. "Annina" is an endearing form of "Anna" and indeed "Annina", the symphonic march, was dedicated to his wife, Anna. Orsomando's symphonic marches are popular Worldwide even today. They include: "[Annina](#)", "[Gaia](#)", "[Banda Sucre](#)", "[Marcia dei fiori](#)", "[Fulgida](#)", "[Nostalgia](#)", "[Pupetta innamorata](#)", "[Anima festosa](#)" and "[Cuore abruzzese](#)"

Charlie joined the Italian Center in 1976 and was the Club's Parliamentarian. He was at every meeting and made us tow-the-line according to Robert's Rules of Order. It was like he wrote them, continually studied them, and then lived and breathed them! Yup, Charlie made us stay on topic and conduct proper meetings. However, he was a real gentleman, kind, cultured, and impartial. He was the epitome of a teacher. With a master's in education in Music Education from The Crane School of Music at S.U.N.Y. Potsdam, NY. Charlie was a Music Teacher and Administrator for the Heuvelton Central Schools, Plattsburgh City Schools and retired as the Director of Music for Spackenkill Schools. Charlie took his jobs seriously and that also applied to his Italian Center membership. He was a contributor; the World needs more

Charlies, and we were lucky to have had him.

I can hear Charlie in this... "[ANNINA](#)" - [G.ORSOMANDO](#)

You Asked for Activities – We Got Them - Now Please Support Them – Have Tons of Fun

2026

14 FEB 2026 VALENTINE'S DINNER DANCE

ANOTHER SUCCESS THANKS TO THE EFFORTS OF FRANCO GIANGRASSO AND HIS TEAM!

2026 SPRING DINNER DANCE FRIDAY, MAY 1ST See [Entertainment Below for Details](#)

ANOTHER SUCCESS THANKS TO THE EFFORTS OF MO RICCI AND HIS TEAM!

IWAGY PRESENTS WINES OF SICILY AND CAMPANIA JULY 15TH, 2026

[SEE FLYER BELOW!](#)

TRIP TO SARATOGA SUNDAY, AUGUST 9TH ALWAYS A MAGNIFICENT EVENT!

SIGN UP NOW! RAY PANTALEO, RAYP520@AOL.COM See [Entertainment Below for Details](#)

\$140PP, INCLUDES ALL FEES: BUS, TENTED PICNIC AREA, ENTRANCE/PROGRAM, DINNER @ DELMONICOS

WORKING ON A COLUMBUS DAY WEEKEND EVENT IN OCTOBER

[IWAGY](#) PRESENTS WINES OF THE TYRRHENIAN MAINLAND AND ISLANDS (CAMPANIA & SICILY)

WEDNESDAY, JULY 15TH, 2026, 6:30 PM

SEE FLYER BELOW

RAY PANTALEO IS PLANNING A COMEDY SHOW FOR OCTOBER 10TH.

ERNIE BRUNO IS GOING TO DO A BIG RAFFLE RIGHT BEFORE THE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS

2025

August 4th Anthony Comunale Memorial Golf Tournament to benefit the Dr. Bacile Scholarship Fund

A ROUSING SUCCESS – [SEE SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT](#)

August 17th Saratoga Bus Trip

A ROUSING SUCCESS THANKS TO THE EFFORTS OF RAY PANTALEO AND HIS TEAM

September 12th Italian Center Dinner Dance

ANOTHER ROUSING SUCCESS THANKS TO THE EFFORTS OF MO RICCI, RAY PANTALEO, AND HIS TEAM

September 21st Bocce Tournament/Summer

ANOTHER SUCCESS THANKS TO THE EFFORTS OF PEOPLE LIKE RAY PANTALEO AND TOM VIANI

BOCCE TOURNAMENT PRIZES AWARDED TO ANTHONY FEO & ANDY KUTCHMA

Italian Center Progressive Ball October 25, 2025

SUPER SENIOR CELEBRATION, ANOTHER SUCCESS

14 Dec 2025 Members Only Christmas Luncheon

GOOD TIME/FOOD WHEN OLD/NEW MEMBERS MINGLE – TOYS FOR TOTS AND “100 CLUB” DRAWING

ANOTHER SUCCESS THANKS TO THE EFFORTS OF PEOPLE LIKE TOM VIANI, JACK CASTELLI, AND OTHERS



IWAGY PRESENTS

WINES OF THE TYRRHENIAN MAINLAND AND ISLANDS (CAMPANIA & SICILY)

GREAT WINES "A BUON MERCATO" (AT A GOOD PRICE RELATIVELY)

WEDNESDAY, JULY 15TH, 2026, 6:30 PM

AT THE ITALIAN CENTER – 1195 RTE. 376, WAPPINGERS FALLS

Participation is by reservation only - Reservations are limited to the first 60 received!

Deadline for Reservations & Payment: Friday, July 10, 2026

Price: \$55 for IWAGY or Italian Center member, and \$60 for guest

To request your reservation

The IWAGY Coordinator for this event is Stephanie Pyrek (shp0304@aol.com) – hats off to Stephanie

But please email Tim Free timothybfree@gmail.com or call (845) 896-6361 for reservations

A BIT ABOUT THE EVENT

In October 2025, Steve Carrizzo, the "Wine Philosopher" presented us the wines of Piedmont/Piemonte (North Italy/Settentrione). He explained the wines, the history of the region, and led a tasting of some exceptional examples of those wines. It was well received! This event focuses on wines closer to his roots, Southern Italy, the Mezzogiorno/Meridionale (Steve's roots are half Sicilian, the other half from Naples, the regional capital of Campania).

Some of the wines we'll be tasting are:

- Benanti Lamorèmio Metodo Classico Brut Rosato 2022 (Sicily)
- Clelia Romano 'Colli di Lapio' Fiano di Avellino 2024 (Campania)
- Vigneti Vecchio Etna Rosso Contrada Crasa 2018 (Sicily)
- Mastroberardino Taurasi Radici 2019 (Campania)

To show how foods can complement wine and mutually expose "hidden" delicious flavors, IWAGY's Food Committee Chair, Joe DiDonato, will provide a plate of "little foods" that do just that! An experience we're sure you'll enjoy!

(And rumor has it that the Italian Center may provide an authentic Southern Italian dish!)
Have special dietary needs? Let Tim Free know and we will tailor a plate especially for you.

A BIT ABOUT THE IWAGY WINE CLUB - [HTTPS://WWW.IWAGY.ORG/](https://www.iwagy.org/)

PS: Scientists say that a high consumption of fruits and vegetables alongside moderate wine/grape juice intake reduces oxidative stress (benefits health). [See this recent research by local Italian scientists \(Franco Caruso, Miriam Rossi, Alessio Caruso\).](#)

Secretary's Report

Members and Friends of the Italian Center... If you need any information and/or have questions about the content of the newsletter or communications, please contact our Secretary:

Paul Waldbillig at (845) 242-0004 or secretary@theitaliancenter.com.

Also, if you have interesting entries for the Newsletter, please send them to newsletter@theitaliancenter.com. (Note the dates for submission below and submit them earlier than later).

Any questions and/or issues regarding the technical aspects of newsletter, website, social media or if you need your credentials for the private [Membership](#) section, please send an email to support@theitaliancenter.com.

Also, new [Membership Application](#) is currently available, so please pass it on to anyone whom you think might want to join and enjoy our club and make it even grander.

Would you like to share comments and/or suggestions directly with the Board of Trustees? If so, please send an email to the Chairman of the Board at: board@theitaliancenter.com.

Updated Newsletter Schedule		
<u>Submit Content Before</u>	<u>Publish By</u>	<u>Meeting Night</u>
Tuesday, July 21, 2026	Tuesday, July 28, 2026	Tuesday, August 4, 2026
Tuesday, August 18, 2026	Tuesday, August 25, 2026	Tuesday, September 1, 2026
Tuesday, September 22, 2026	Tuesday, September 29, 2026	Tuesday, October 6, 2026
Tuesday, October 20, 2026	Tuesday, October 27, 2026	Tuesday, November 3, 2026
Tuesday, November 17, 2026	Tuesday, November 24, 2026	Tuesday, December 1, 2026

PLEASE HELP/ENCOURAGE MEMBERS TO RECEIVE/READ NEWSLETTERS

([HTTP://WWW.THEITALIANCENTER.COM/MEMBERSHIP](http://www.theitaliancenter.com/membership))

PLEASE HELP US MAKE THE NEWSLETTER EVEN BETTER

They are in a permanent “corporate” data store open to us and the public because:

- They have publicity utility and help us fulfill our Corporate Charter to Promote our Culture/Heritage.
- They provide a historical record of our activity (a Monthly “Intentions/Commitments/Progress Report”).
- They provide space to honor Members, Our families, Italians/Things Italian, and our Achievements as a Club.

**IT IS A TEAM EFFORT! MAKE OUR NEWSLETTERS EVEN BETTER! CONTRIBUTE MATERIAL, SUGGESTIONS, CRITIQUE, ETC.
READ IT! ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO READ IT!**

Please ask your fellow members if they “get/read the Newsletter?” If they lack it, help them get it online/hard copy! If they do get it but do not read it, please tell them about the value of reading it if you are so inclined.

If you are not so inclined, or have comments, complaints, suggestions, contributions, please let us know: secretary@theitaliancenter.com or president@theitaliancenter.com

DITTO FOR OUR CLUB! IT IS A TEAM EFFORT! HELP MAKE OUR CLUB EVEN BETTER!

If every member made some effort that uniquely enhanced the club even by 1%, it'd be 3 times as good as it is now! Too busy? We get it! We live in the fast lane. But think about it, something might fit into your lifestyle:

- Attend meeting(s) and contribute to discussions e.g., project(s) ideas and/or efforts
- Attend open function(s), bring guests >> 1%
- Help with function(s); Help with “maintenance” >> 1%
- Support Raffles and Fund Raisers >> 1%
- Bring in new active Members >> 1%
- Ogni cosa fa brodo! Everything, big or little, helps! Collectively >> 200% Improvement

Entertainment Committee Report

Chair: Ray Pantaleo, rayp520@aol.com, 914-456-4761

Attendees at our events, including Provincial Nights, are **mostly nonmembers**.

We emphasize that we, with earnest effort, are trying to provide events that **benefit and please the Membership**.
More Member participation and support welcomed! Your ideas, your wants, and needs, welcomed!



**EVEN THE MIGHTY LION NEEDS A PRIDE/UN BRANCO TO SURVIVE!
RAY CANNOT DO IT ALONE, NOR CAN LOU, NOR CAN ANYBODY!
THIS IS YOUR CLUB - MAKE GOOD THINGS HAPPEN!
JOIN THE PRIDE!
WANTED: IDEAS AND IMPLEMENTORS!
HAVE AN IDEA - SHARE IT.
HAVE PRIDE - MAKE IT HAPPEN!**



We Want Your Input for 2026 Events! Help with Ideas and Support!

Serious Ideas Will Be Explored - Commit Your Support and We Will Make Things Happen

Contact Ray Pantaleo 914-456-4761 RAYP520@AOL.COM

**FRIDAY, MAY 1ST, AT THE ITALIAN CENTER
2026 SPRING DINNER DANCE - WE SAID GOOD-BYE TO WINTER AND HELLO TO SPRING**

2026 TRIP TO SARATOGA SUNDAY, AUGUST 9TH ALWAYS A GREAT EVENT!

SIGN UP NOW! RAY PANTALEO, RAYP520@AOL.COM

*\$140PP, INCLUDES ALL FEES: BUS, TENTED PICNIC AREA, ENTRANCE/PROGRAM, DINNER @ DELMONICOS
IT WILL BE GREAT JUST LIKE LAST YEAR AND EVERY YEAR!*



WORKING ON A COLUMBUS DAY WEEKEND EVENT IN OCTOBER

Marketing/Advertising Committee Report

Objectives of the Committee

*Increase Club Membership, General Member Participation, and the Club's Presence in our community!
Increase Attendance and Support for Our Activities, Events, Fundraising*

Possible Strategies for Achieving these Objectives

*Increase Club Presence on Social Media and in Local "News" Media
Update the Website and Newsletter, and Increase Their Penetration into the Community
Interested in bringing the Club back into the light? Contact Secretary! Join the Committee!*

On Friday, September 26th, **our new and improved website** went live! Have you visited www.theitaliancenter.com to check out our fresh look along with a new online calendar of events? Have you visited the updated Member Only Portal!

For all the latest Italian Center news, be sure to like us on Facebook and follow us on Instagram @TheItalianCenterNY.

Again, interested in bringing the Club back into the light?

Get material to put on our social media!

Have Material to Put In our public media then contact Secretary!

Like us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on [Instagram](#).

LET'S MAKE IT HAPPEN!

Do Your Part to Keep Our Social Media Living and Breathing!

[Website](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#)

Have something to put in those or feel something is missing?

Send material or thoughts to the [President](#) or [Secretary](#)

president@theitaliancenter.com | secretary@theitaliancenter.com

And Don't Forget to Like Us on Facebook!

A SPECIAL REMINDER TO OUR MEMBERS

Every month we publish our Club Newsletter. It intends to convey timely Club business and information, but also to broaden members' knowledge of our culture, Club history, its members, and its grand times. It gives Officers/Committees a space to convey general plans, aspirations, and needs.

Its "Member Newsletter Submissions Section" allows Members to share reminisces about the Club, relevant people, and to share knowledge of relevant language and culture.

Its "Wellness Section" allows Members to share fond memories of deceased members.

We encourage Members to submit such for publication!

Some words, perhaps, with photos, would be grand!

It does not have to be "pretty"; you can leave the formatting and wordsmithing to us!

All your entries for the newsletter can be sent to: newsletter@theitaliancenter.com.

The Italian Center has a heart and soul! It is its members!

It exists because of them! Nothing gets done without them! If it is good, it is because of them!

It is not easy! Manna does not fall from the skies. Luckily, we have had, and have, a good "heart and soul"!

Remember this Pep Talk nestled in an Italian Lesson



Siciliano: "A tempu ri racina e ficu nun c'e ne cumpari e ne amicu!"

Italiano: "In tempi [di raccolta] di uva e fichi non c'e compare ne amico!"

Inglese/English: "When it is time to harvest there is neither neighbor nor friend!"

Hidden Meaning: "Everybody loves the fruits of labor, fewer willing to work for it!"

Do your part! It takes a village! Prove that saying wrong!

And remember:

L'unione fa la forza! – There is strength in numbers and unity!

and

Ogni cosa fa brodo – About anything can make broth – Every little bit helps – Do what you can!

Andiamo a gonfie vele! Let's go [forward] at full sail!

Dr. Victor A. Bacile Scholarship Award Program

Including 2025 winners, 131 scholarships valued at more than \$279K have been awarded. Board voted in Dec 2025 to increase the scholarship amount from \$3,000 to \$4,000 for 2026. This program is **only open to Italian Center members in good standing, their spouses, and their children. (Applicants must submit Applications by End of September)**

Not all applicants receive a scholarship, but the odds are good, and it is a significant IC Membership perk.

For general information, access this link: <http://www.theitaliancenter.com/scholarship>.

If you would like to volunteer or have specific questions, please email scholarship@theitaliancenter.com or call **Joe Pantaleo**, (845) 462-4080. Officers: Paul Waldbillig - President, Bob DiLullo - Treasurer, Joe Pantaleo - Secretary. Representing the Italian Center on the Board are Bob Civitano, George Harnen, Jeff Waldbillig, Al Cappelli, Bob DiLullo, Joe Pantaleo, Lou Piro, Mo Ricci, Paul Waldbillig, and Dr. Larry Zolnik

Anthony Comunale Memorial Golf Tournament

Agenda & Location - Flight #1 (Monday, August 3)

- 7:00 AM Registration
- 8:00 AM Playing starts
- 1:00 PM Awards

McCann Memorial Golf Course

155 Wilbur Boulevard
Poughkeepsie, NY 12603
(845) 471-3917

Monday, August 3, 2026

Register

Sponsor

Donate

Click Here to Get to Website

<https://charitygolftoday.com/event?e=28131&ce=c63e98>

DVM Industries LLC

Prager Metis CPAs

Silvestri Family

It Was A Good Year, Inc.



Hot drama sauces

Dunkin - Chen
Management Group, Inc.

Mora Chiropractic

THANK YOU NOTES from the January 2025 Scholarship Recipients

Brianna Fasolino J: Thank you so much for awarding me this scholarship. Your support will help me achieve my goal of becoming a teacher by allowing me to focus on my education and growth. I truly appreciate your generosity and belief in my future.

Austin Mora: Thank you so much for choosing me as one of the recipients to earn this scholarship. This money will go towards my passion of learning more about the human body. This money will also help reduce the burden of my student loans and put more focus into my future career. I would like to thank the sponsors not just for myself but for all the other students that they help achieve higher education, for without the sponsors and their great generosity this would not be possible. Overall, thank you very much for this award and scholarship, and this money will be efficiently and effectively put to use.

Elena Waldbillig: I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to express my heartfelt gratitude for your part in making the Victor A. Bacile Scholarship possible. Your generosity will have a significant impact on my academic journey, and I am truly honored to be a recipient. This scholarship will help me on the path to achieving my goals, allowing me to focus more on my studies and future aspirations. Thank you once again for your support and generosity-I am deeply appreciative of this opportunity. Warmly,

Emily Civitano: I am truly grateful to the sponsors whose generosity makes these scholarships possible each year. Your support helps students like me continue our education while working toward our future goals and aspirations. Thank you for investing in students and for helping preserve the traditions and values celebrated through the Italian Center. I sincerely appreciate your kindness and support.

Gabriella Rado: As a civil engineering student at the University of Notre Dame and a Dutchess County native of Italian descent, I am honored to be one of the recipients of the 2025 Victor A. Bacile Scholarship. I cannot tell you how much it means to me and my family not only to have the financial support of this scholarship but to be a part of the history of this great charitable effort. I am grateful to all who support the fund and its golf tournament fundraiser in a variety of ways--especially those who generously sponsor this event and make this scholarship possible in order to carry on the legacy of Dr. Bacile.

Bri Giangrasso: I would like to sincerely thank you for awarding me this scholarship and for your continued generosity in supporting students each year. As someone who takes great pride in my Italian heritage, it means so much to receive support from an organization that helps celebrate and strengthen our community and traditions. I am especially grateful to the sponsors whose generosity helps make these scholarships possible and whose support encourages students like me to continue working toward our goals. I also apologize for not sending this thank you sooner, but please know how truly grateful I am for your kindness and support.

Other Scholarship and Educational Opportunities

Our Dr. Bacile Scholarship is a perk for IC members' children and spouses. Here are few other scholarship opportunities:

Columbus Citizens Foundation: <https://columbuscitizens.org/scholarships/scholarship-applications/> (and others)

National Italian American Foundation: <https://www.niaf.org/programs/scholarships/>

National Organization of Italian American Women: <https://www.noiaaw.org/scholarships/>

Order Sons and Daughters of Italy in America: <https://www.osdia.org/initiatives/scholarships/>

UNICO Foundation: <https://www.unico.org/scholarships>

STUDY ABROAD U.S. Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs: <https://www.gilmanscholarship.org/>

Bocce League

BOCCE LEAGUE GAMES EVERY MONDAY EVENINGS PROMPTLY AT 6:00

Bocce League Chair - Joe Pedota at sarge1912@aol.com

Unless Cancelled/Rescheduled for Weather, Etc.

Even if you do not play, the bar is open, join your brothers/sisters, watch them play, cheer them on, socialize! Have fun. Like Professor Franco Caruso did!



I've watched many Bocce Games in my Calabria and in Italy, in Europe, in the Americas, but I never had such an exquisite birthday cake at a Bocce Game like the one the players made to honor Jody Chafouleas on her birthday! Fun games; wonderful camaraderie! I'm not currently an IC member, but come January next year, when I'm back from Italy, I plan to proudly join The Italian Center!



THE FOUR SPONSORS (TEAMS) FOR BOCCE NIGHT ARE:

GINO'S PIZZA & RESTAURANT (GREEN)

M. RICCI ELECTRIC (RED)

MILANESE ITALIAN RESTAURANT (BLACK)

JD'S PUB & BREW (BLUE)

GINO GEMMATI

MAURIZIO RICCI

SANTINO MILANESE

GINO GEMMATI

[HTTPS://WWW.GINOSPIZZERIAS.COM/](https://www.ginospizzerias.com/)

[HTTPS://WWW.MRICCIELECTRIC.COM/](https://www.mricciselectric.com/)

[HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/MILANESERESTAURANT/](https://www.facebook.com/milaneserestaurant/)

[HTTPS://WWW.JDPUBNBREW.COM/](https://www.jdpubnbrew.com/)

Volunteer Opportunities for Members

Renovation Committee Needs Your Physical/Logistical Help, Expertise, Equipment

If you can help, let Vincent Murray know at (845) 724-3154 | (914) 456-7448, vicepresident2@theitaliancenter.com.

Servers, Kitchen Help, Set Up/Tear Down for Club Events

Volunteers needed especially for our Regular Meeting Nights and Provincial Nights

PLEASE If you can help, let Lou Piro know (845) 629-8905, president@theitaliancenter.com.

WE RELY ON YOURSELVES TO MAKE GOOD THINGS HAPPEN

This Is Our Club, Make Your Mark, Have Some Fun, And Honor Your Heritage!

We are truly blessed to have members with skills, resources, and devotion that generously help us do things we could not do without their support. Whether it is rebuilding our staircase, fixing the plumbing, serving a great meal on Provincial Night, running a committee, being a Board Member, or whatever, we'd be lost without our Members' Support!

BE AN ACTIVE MEMBER! IT IS FUN. IT HAS REWARDS, IT IS NECESSARY!

If you would like to help with our facilities, please contact our 2nd Vice President, Vincent Murray at (845) 724-3154 | (914) 456-7448, vicepresident2@theitaliancenter.com.



Here Is the Current List of Things We Need Help to Do!

Note: Not A Complete List – **We Can Always Find Ways to Use Your Talents!**

Finished Club Tasks

- Assist hanging privacy panels in men's room
- Bollards to prevent people from parking on grass
- Clean out rear gutter and other gutters
- Electrical work for fire alarm inspection
- Fill in depression over septic tank
- Finish painting the building
- Hang TV in Bar and connect to cable
- Mount AED box in the lobby
- Power wash kitchen carts
- Repair Gutter
- Repair pipe for septic
- Replace sink washers in multiple sinks
- Clean out rear gutter
- Fill ditch by mailbox
- Prune trees around the property
- Put up PVC strip in bathroom
- Replace batteries for emergency exits
- Replace sink washers in multiple sinks

Indoor Club Tasks

- Clean & Paint Kitchen floor and walls
- Clean and repair some of the dining room chairs
- Fill in gaps around the front door
- Floor mats in dish room
- Grab bars in bathroom stalls
- Organize and possibly improve attic flooring
- Paint Bar door and molding
- Paint molding around front door
- Repair bathroom sheet rock
- Repair chairs
- Replace outlet by men room door in foyer
- Help re-assemble the bocce/utility shed

Outdoor Club Tasks

- Clean out the storage unit to eliminate monthly cost
- Clean up and out the trailer we have at Bottini's
- Fill in channels around stairs and seed
- Hide heat tape wires in sofit
- Mount No Parking signs in front of the building
- Mount One way traffic signs in front of building
- Paint Handicap ramp
- Repair sidewalk



Membership Committee Report

Please take a moment to update your member information... If you have had some changes or simply would like to update your information with us, please send us an email at membership@theitaliancenter.com. If you are interested in helping the Membership Committee or have ideas on how to attract and sustain good members, please contact **Al Tripoli** (application management) at membership@theitaliancenter.com or advertising@theitaliancenter.com.

Our Club is special and unique in the area. It has been and should continue to be something special in the lives of its members and the community – get involved – help it grow and thus improve. **ASK SOMEONE TO JOIN OUR CLUB - BECOME INVOLVED IN COMMITTEES - SHARE OUR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER - VOLUNTEER WHEN YOU SEE MEMBERS NEED HELP.**

June 2026's Meeting New Members Initiated:



Susan Barone (*Tina Ruggiero*)
Gerard Musci (*Ray Pantaleo*)
Paul Gatta (*Paul Waldbillig*)
Dave Gatta (*Paul Waldbillig*)
David Tecchio (*Tom Martinelli*)
Bruce Peterson (*Carmine Mellili*)

MAKE THE ITALIAN CENTER A FAMILY AFFAIR!

HELP GROW PRODUCTIVE MEMBERSHIP - SPONSOR GOOD APPLICANTS MALE **AND** FEMALE
HELP MAKE THIS CLUB EVEN MORE VIBRANT!

Do you know someone who would like to become a member of our club?

Check out the updated [MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION](#) and pass onto friends and family that might join and enjoy our Club!

**Membership Dues Can Be Paid by Credit Cards or Cash at the Bar, Or Send Your Check To:
The Italian Center, Attn: Ron Knapp FS, 1195 Route 376, Wappingers Falls, NY 12590**

Wellness Committee Report

Sal Polizzotto is the Wellness Chairperson! Members must be his eyes, ears, and representatives. **Report member wellness information to Sal Polizzotto** at (845) 590-7319 or wellness@theitaliancenter.com.

Please volunteer to serve on the Wellness Committee. It serves and honors our members by helping them and their families in times of need. When members are in the hospital, ill, convalescing, or have passed, please let Sal or the president know of such instances and/or of the status. The Committee and the Board will take it from there and decide/take appropriate action.

General - Sick at Home or Hospitalized, Convalescing at Home or in Rehab

Residing at Assisted Living Facilities

Bob Spinello (100 years old; oldest member) is in Lutheran care

Deceased Members (Within Recent Membership Cycle)



3/27/2026	Paul Sebastian Mancarella - 71	11/29/2025	Mario Bertolozzi - 95
1/13/2026	Giulio Di Giacomo - 92	11/5/2025	John M. Angiulli - 80
1/9/2026	Marquis G. "Marc" VanDeWater - 83	11/4/2025	John Bordi Jr. - 91
		9/26/2025	Leonard Spinelli - 88
		8/10/2025	Carlo Marinaro - 66

Member Newsletter Submissions



Use this section to share fond memories of the Club/its members, or knowledge/experiences regarding Italian or Italian American history, culture, and/or language.

CONTRIBUTE! You can leave formatting/wordsmithing to us!

Send your entries to secretary@theitaliancenter.com or president@theitaliancenter.com!

Here I'll explore some things Ancient Roman, today's Italy's "4th of July, and some IC history!

AN EXAMPLE OF THE AMAZING ENGINEERING FEATS OF THE ANCIENT ROMANS

The Ancient Romans were beyond technically astute for their time. They built roads, bridges, aqueducts, water/sewer systems, heating/cooling systems, buildings, tools, and weapons that required sophisticated knowledge and understanding of physics and its application that few in their era possessed or used so effectively.

The theory and the “hidden” underpinnings of that physics was of course unknown to them, but they had mathematics, rudimentary calculus, and experiential models to draw on, gleaned from the more ancient Babylonians, Egyptians, and Greeks. They did not have to reinvent the “wheel”, but they certainly improved the “wheel” and they were exceptionally good at what they did!

They were exceptional because they were: **good students**, and they willingly learned from many cultures; **well educated** as learning and training was woven into every enterprise; **experimenters** – try-for-fit was mostly willingly financed; **long sighted** not short sighted and they purposely **built robust things** that could stand the test of time.

They were exceptional because of their unique **meticulousness, drive, can-do attitude, and managerial/logistical skills.**

But the Ancient Romans were **super exceptional because they always had an ulterior purpose** for what they did! They **far exceeded requirements for psychological purposes** This bridge exemplifies all that exceptionalism. I offer [this as an example](#).

IL PONTE DI GIULIO CESARE SUL RENO – THE BRIDGE CAESAR BUILT OVER THE RHINE



Julius Caesar wanted to secure the eastern border (west bank of Rhine) of the new provinces against plundering Germanic tribes. Caesar decided to confront these Germanic tribes (east bank of Rhine) and show support for the Ubians, an allied German tribe on Roman side of the Rhine. While he could have crossed the river by boats which the Ubians had offered to provide, Caesar decided (was the much more expensive choice) to **build a bridge to demonstrate Rome's ability to bring the fight at any time to the Germanic tribes.** To understand how tremendously difficult that would be one has to consider these things:



Caesar's Rhine Bridge, an 1814 depiction by John Soane

The massive scale of the project: The length of the bridge is estimated 460 to 1,300 ft long, its width up to 30 ft, the river was around 30 ft deep. Building such a massive bridge across such a river was unique for the times. This bridge had to have unique durability, load capacity, and ability to withstand powerful currents.

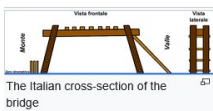
The logistics of it all: Caesar had to bring to bear scores of people (soldiers, engineers, skilled workers, technical managers, support staff), as well as supplies, tools, and building materials. Note that there were hostile Germanic Tribes right there, ready, wanting, and able to attack the workers and material/supply transporters at every turn, so he had to construct defenses and deploy soldiers before, during, and after every effort involved. Obviously, no cargo planes, truck conveyors, night goggles, drone planes, etc. existed to help him logistically or militarily.

The forces of nature: The Rhine River has formidable currents. Not only do you have to engineer a bridge that can carry massive loads and that can withstand the currents over time, but you must somehow work effectively in those currents to build the bridge!

The timeframe: The massive bridge project had to be completed in record time because of weather and risks of enemy buildup.

The need for innovation and special tools: For example, double timber pilings had to be rammed into the river bottom. A unique massive tool was engineered and built to drive the posts into the riverbed.

So, **Caesar chose the most expensive and challenging way to cross that river. Why?** Was he stupid? Irrational? Nope! He had an ulterior reason – a psychological warfare reason to spend the extra money, etc. Let's explore Ancient Rome's psyche in that regard.



The Italian cross-section of the bridge



Reconstruction in Koblenz of a Roman pile driver, used to build the Rhine bridges

A “PSYCHOLOGY” BEHIND THE TECHNOLOGICAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF ANCIENT ROME

To be clear here, in my modern mind Ancient Rome was a dirty, totally amoral, fighter. I do not condone most of its tactics/strategy in war, and lots even in peace. In today’s World they would be war criminals and slave traffickers. Ancient Rome abused conquered populations through mass slavery, brutal exploitation, and extreme violence. They occasionally offered benefits of citizenship and enhanced infrastructure, but destruction of resistance was THE goal and that goal often made things ugly for the people conquered. It’s fair to marvel at Rome’s ingenuity, but you do not have to, nor should you, condone it as a model for today’s geopolitical world.

“But the Ancient Romans were existentially exceptional because they always had an ulterior purpose for what they did!”

They far exceeded requirements for psychological warfare purposes. One cannot overlook that aspect of Ancient Roman’s tactical and strategic psyche when evaluating its actions. Almost every action served psychological ulterior purposes. Even the most practical of things that Rome did, it did in a way to impress and reshape minds. Ancient Rome waged not only sophisticated bellicose war but also sophisticated psychological warfare. Let’s explore a tad of the latter.

Demonize/dehumanize the adversary – paint them as evil and morally/intellectually inferior to Romans so the people and Senate will be more willing to support campaigns with treasure and bodies. It especially wanted legionnaires to have NO pity for nor empathy/sympathy with the adversary.

The construction of infrastructure – the finished product AND the way it was accomplished was meant to impress! Be it a bridge, a road, a glorious encampment, a dam, rerouting water, flattening land, etc. it was geared to impress adversaries, so they’d be more fearful and less inclined to fight against them. Also, these things were done to leave a mark that “says” this land is now emphatically Roman. An example of Rome’s psyche in this regard is certainly il ponte – the bridge – talked about above. The message the bridge project gave adversaries, was clear: “any army that could build such a bridge was not to be messed with”; the message to those in the legions or thinking of joining the legions was: “you are (can be) part of an organization that can work miracles”.

The speed of movement – speed was real and illusional – in either case it made for ever anxious and unsure adversaries. Sure, Roman Legions moved agilely and speedily for the times, but also Rome knew how to position “hidden” troops in a variety of places that would appear “magically” when adversaries or conquered got out of line. The “enemy” was never sure they could get away with things before Roman legions showed up. But how could “hidden” legions be “hidden” – at least partially because legions were silent!

The use of silence – the legionnaires were schooled in how to be quiet and to communicate silently. This naturally helped legions to surprise adversaries, but also their so well-coordinated activities did not comport with their ever-present silence. **It was spooky!**

Formations and Symbols – a legion on the march was like a well-oiled and well-aligned machine. Just seeing the mass of soldiers (the legions) silent and always in step was a scary sight. These were obviously well-trained, well-disciplined soldiers. Seeing them march and at rest was scary to adversaries because all seemed unworldly perfect with hardly much effort or communication.

The executions of people – crucifixions and other inhuman punishments were purposely and publicly done. Of course, chilling!

The tricks and illusions - creating false “realities” – Ancient Rome was expert at giving their adversaries the impression that they were better supplied, more numerous, and more fit than they really were. Also, that they were where they were not. Also, that they were less well off than they really were. Etc. (you get the drift). Some of these tricks/illusions were geared not just for immediate tactical advantage, but to scare the daylight out of adversaries; to make them too frightened to face the legions in the first place! For instance, convincing the adversary that their water supply could be poisoned by a snap of a Roman General’s finger.

Taking advantage of the religion of adversaries – examples: if an adversary’s religion lead them to be scared of ghosts at night the legions would take on a ghostly presence and attack at night; if an adversary believed in signs from their gods the Romans would create ominous signs that made the adversaries think their gods were displeased and would not support them. More “comical”, if an adversary’s religion was heavily iconic, the legionnaires would detail their Roman person and gear with the adversary’s major icons making the adversary hesitant to strike a Roman for fear of striking their (the adversary’s) god!

Spreading misinformation - It did not have the internet, radio, etc. but it had a remarkably effective way of spreading the word mouth to ear, and it had a well-organized, outfitted, and staffed “pony express”. And see “**The tricks and illusions**” above.

JUNE 2ND - THE "FESTA DELLA REPUBBLICA" - ITALY'S "4TH OF JULY"



Every June 2nd Italy commemorates its "4th of July", called "the Feast of the Republic". On this day, Italians celebrate the post-WWII 2 June 1946 referendum (enacted 1948) that abolished the monarchy and drove the House of Savoy from power. This referendum was Italy's first vote under universal suffrage (**all** legit adult Italians could vote). The vote

decided Italy's form of government following WWII and the fall of fascism. It framed a truly new Italy and by extension Europe.

Every year since, Italy celebrates that 1946 referendum. The main celebration takes place in Rome but the Festa della Repubblica is a national holiday celebrated throughout Italy.

At the start of this year's Festa in Rome, an Italian friend of mine took some photos for me. He shot them from the Municipal Rose Garden of Rome, where the yearly international tricolor rose competition takes place on this day. I share here some of his photos.

No government sponsored patriotic celebration starts without fighter jets painting the sky with the country's colors. Tricolor jet contrails to the left started Italy's 2nd of June celebration in Rome.

In Rome, a wreath is laid as a tribute to the Italian Unknown Soldier at the "Altare della Patria" by the President of the Italian Republic accompanied by a military parade along Via dei Fori Imperiali in Rome. Pictures are of troops warming up for the parade.

Background

Italy had several so-called "republican" governments. Examples: the ancient Roman Republic and the medieval maritime republics. From Cicero to Niccolò Machiavelli, Italian philosophers have imagined the foundations of republicanism. Giuseppe Mazzini revived the republican idea in Italy in the 19th century. Mazzini also influenced politicians thereafter, among them Woodrow Wilson, David Lloyd George, Mahatma Gandhi, Golda Meir and Jawaharlal Nehru. Subsequently, the philosopher Carlo Cattaneo promoted a secular and republican Italy in the extension of Mazzini's ideas but organized as a federal republic.

Circa 1850, the projects of Mazzini and Cattaneo were thwarted by unification seekers including Giuseppe Garibaldi who valued unity first and foremost. This earned Garibaldi criticism from many republicans. While a laborious administrative unification began, and a first **Italian** parliament was elected, Victor Emmanuel II was proclaimed king of Italy; that was incongruous to many because it was incongruous to "modern" Democratic Republics like USA.



[Click to see marching band play](#)



From 1861 to 1948, Italy was a constitutional monarchy, not a true democracy. In 1861 and thereafter **few** Italians had the right to vote, and the death penalty could be used on those that advocated dethroning the King. There was an "elected" Chamber and Senate, but mostly composed of nobles, industrial figures, bourgeoisie, and large landowners, more concerned with economic progress, order, and social conservatism that benefited themselves, not so much il popolo. Not until around 1912 did Italy start to evolve towards political democratic liberalism. Then it established universal **male** suffrage. That "small" step allowed Italy in 1914, at the outbreak of World War I, to be counted among the world's Liberal Democracies.

In 1946 Italians clearly chose Liberal Democracy! With universal **male/female** suffrage around 90% of the 28M Eligible Voters voted! They voted 54.3% for a republic (for referendum) and 45.7% against (for monarchy). Given the illiberalism of 1861-1920's, and then the ugly heavy foot of fascism until the end of WWII, the referendum was an amazingly glorious transformational event in Italy's history. It well deserves a grand yearly celebration, and knowing Italians, you know it will be a GRAND celebration!

**BEFORE WE CLOSE THIS NEWSLETTER - LET'S VISIT AND REFLECT ON OUR HISTORY
What happened around July 2009?**

**2nd Annual Member's Clambake
extravaganza. 18 July 2009!**

This 2009 event will be held on the Italian Center grounds on Saturday, July 18th, 2009, starting at noon. This year's clambake promises to be fun for all members of your family. The day will begin at noon with hamburgers, hot dogs and sausage and peppers. Guess what **Franco Giangrasso and his merry band of "clam s[h]uckers"** [editor note: LOL] has in store for you after that? Along with unlimited steamed and raw clams all day long, they're planning a chicken barbecue, roasted red potatoes and corn on the cob with all of the trimmings. Not to mention delicious cold beer on tap just the way you like it on a warm summer Sunday afternoon. There will be plenty of things for the kids to do too. No family clambake would be complete without a "jump castle" and all kinds of fun thing for the kids to do while mom and dad "sip a few" with their friends. At 2:00 Michele Barone and her band will get your feet stomping and later in the evening **Franco promises to end the day with some "secret" entertainment.**

2009 Schedule of Events

JULY 2009						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
June 28	June 29	June 30	1	2	3	4
				5:30-8:00 Sera Italiana Dinner**	5:30-8:30 Friday Night Buffet	CLOSED FOR INDEPENDENCE DAY!
5	6:00-8:30 Sports Night Buffet	6:00 Dinner Meeting	8	5:30-8:00 Sera Italiana Dinner**	5:30-8:30 Friday Night Buffet	11:30 Saturday Lunch
12	6:00-8:30 Sports Night Buffet	14	15	5:30-8:00 Sera Italiana Dinner**	5:30-8:30 Friday Night Buffet with Music by CloudNYne 7:00-10:00 pm	1:00 Italian Center Clambake (no Sat. lunch)
19	6:00-8:30 Sports Night Buffet	21	22	5:30-8:00 Sera Italiana Dinner**	5:30-8:30 Friday Night Buffet	11:30 Saturday Lunch
26	6:00-8:30 Sports Night Buffet	7:00 pm Provincial Night	29	5:30-8:00 Sera Italiana Dinner**	5:30-8:30 Friday Night Buffet	August 1

Contact List

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