



## Newsletter

Volume 1 – No. 04

Holiday

December 5, 2008

### Message from the President

This fourth edition of the MCIIFA newsletter is intended to report on this year's Festival, re-state our mission statement and our goal to unite all the Italian Americans of Mercer County, and offer our Heritage Center for use by Italian American groups to hold meetings, events, functions and carry other activities that promote our cause.

This year's Festival, prepared with great effort and featuring all the attractions documented in the attached third edition of the newsletter, would have been the best ever. We added new features such as the replica of the Trevi Fountain and the Veterans Center, and new fundraising initiatives, such as a car raffle, that would allow us to attract wider participation and thus expand our beneficial activities and retire more of the building's debt.

But it was not to be! The weather was the worst ever with three days of rain, which reduced our attendance to less than one third of last year's and resulted in a net loss of about \$23,000. Even so we are not quitting; we are in fact starting new initiatives and enrolling more volunteers to make next year's event truly memorable.

On the other hand our other major public event, the Columbus Day Parade, did enjoy great weather and was honored by the presence of Governor Corzine and the participation of many civic leaders and citizens.

As we state in our Association's mission statement, we are "Dedicated to promoting and enhancing the heritage and culture of the Italian Americans". To this effect, we hold the yearly festival to remember many of our traditions, showcase our accomplishments, and present them in a festive and joyful way for everyone, and especially the younger generations, to see and enjoy. What a great way for adults to show our heritage to their children and grandchildren!

In addition to the Festival, we are starting in January 2009 a free Cultural Events program on the second and fourth Monday of the month, and on Thursdays we are continuing and expanding the Italian Language classes that we started last year. Please see the related announcements in the following pages. More information on these and other events throughout the year is available on our web site,

[www.italianamericanfestival.com](http://www.italianamericanfestival.com).

Of course, we will continue to hold the Buffet Dinner featuring great Italian food in the festive atmosphere of our newly decorated second floor Ballroom on the last Thursday of the month.

I cannot emphasize enough our stated goal of reaching out and uniting all the Italian Americans of Mercer County to work together for the common causes of preserving our heritage, showcasing our culture and becoming a significant force in the life of our community.

In closing, I am extending to each and everyone of you my personal invitation to visit our Center, peruse the varied material on display, visit with old friends and join us in furthering our common cause.

With Good wishes for a safe holiday season, I wish you...

**Buon Natale e  
Felice Anno Nuovo.**

**Cav. John Scarpati**



## Cultural Events at the MCIAFA Heritage Center

The Mercer County Italian American Festival Association (MCIAFA) is proud to announce a new initiative to promote the Italian Heritage and bring the community together on a regular basis to promote cooperation and collaboration with the other organizations in the area.

The Cultural Events series will debut in **January 2009** and will present **two events every month, on the second and fourth Monday**. The program will be made up of live presentations from community members on diverse topics of general interest on the second Monday, followed by a classic Italian movie on the fourth Monday.

The events are open to the public and will be followed by a discussion period after each presentation to provide an opportunity for an exchange of ideas and comments from the participants while enjoying

complimentary light refreshments. The program will be offered free of charge, although a small donation is suggested to defray the cost of operation and the serving of refreshments. All programs start at 7:30PM.

The program committee, composed of Frank Gargione, Joe De Felice, Carl Di Donato and Pat Maffei, is seeking volunteers to join the committee to formulate programs, assist with the preparations for the presentations, welcome guests, serving refreshments and helping with the cleanup after each event.

Detailed information on each program will be posted on the festival web site at the beginning of each month, along with any changes or cancellations. ([www.italianamericanfestival.com](http://www.italianamericanfestival.com))

In case of inclement weather, please call 609 631 7544 for information about cancellation or rescheduling

### The programs for the first six months are as follows:

Jan 12, 2009 Jan 26, 2009	<i>Neapolitan Serenade</i> , presented and sung by Carl Di Donato <b>Movie: Don Camillo</b> with Fernandel and Gino Cervi
Feb. 9, 2009 Feb. 23, 2009	<i>Wine Tasting</i> , presented by Vittorio Vettori <b>Movie: Swept Away</b> with Giancarlo Giannini and Mariangela Melato
Mar 9, 2009 Mar 23, 2009	<i>M.C. Italian American Experience</i> , presented by Bob Immordino <b>Movie: Ciao Professore</b> directed by Lina Wertmuller
Apr 13, 2009 Apr 27, 2009	<i>Pasquetta Program</i> . Bring your own Easter delicacy to share <b>Movie: Cinema Paradiso</b> directed by Giuseppe Tornatore
May 11, 2009 May 25, 2009	<i>Italy then and now</i> , presented by Cristina Fratarcangeli <b>Movie: The tree of the wooden clogs</b> directed by Ermanno Olmi
Jun 8, 2009 June 22, 2009	<i>Italy in Space</i> , presented by Frank Gargione <b>Movie: Two Women</b> with Sophia Loren, directed by Vittorio De Sica

#### **Campanilismo (Continued from Back Page)**

Another factor that tends to reduce the success of Italians as a powerful political and social force is the reluctance to back another Italian because of Campanilismo, or envy, or because everyone wants to be in charge of his small group, and finally for the lack of support, both moral and financial, for those who fight for the improvement of the image of the Italians. Probably this last trait results also from a recent past in which the leaders of the various Italian communities took advantage of the larger part of their fellow countrymen instead of helping them, a condition resulting from the poor knowledge of the language and the limited education that our forebears had received in their country prior to emigrating.

Fortunately, even if our forebears did not receive the education due them, they were acutely aware of its importance, to the point that the second generation of Italians boasts a percentage of college graduates much larger than the norm, a recognition of the importance given to education by those who were deprived of it.

Alas, even as the Italians individually have improved their economic conditions and those abuses no longer prevail, the Italian community, as ethnic group, has not achieved the power it deserves, the power it could have if there were more cohesion and a culture of support, both moral and financial, for the cause of improving the image of the Italians in America.

**TWO ITALIAN COURSES OFFERED  
SPRING 2009  
AT THE HERITAGE CENTER**

**The Italian Heritage Center is offering two course in Italian starting on Thursday January 15, 2009, and continuing every Thursday for ten weeks. The Basic Italian course will meet at 7:00 PM and the Conversation Course will start at 8:15 PM.**

The Basic Italian course will use Standard Deviants ITALIAN videotapes. Standard Deviants is the nation's leading producer of educational videos and DVDs for high school and college students. The company has become synonymous with excellence, providing programming to over 3,000 accounts ranging from Blockbuster, Wal\*Mart and Target to specialty retailers and educational institutions. The course will emphasize reading skills and vocabulary building through interaction with the participants. Written material will be provided to enable retention of the concepts learned during the lesson. **A fee of \$ 25.00 will be charged to defray the cost of supplies.**

The Conversational Italian Course is intended for people that have reasonable reading and grammar skills who want to practice speaking the language. Each week the conversation will be based on pre-assigned reading material, such as a short story, a current article or a given topic. All students will be encouraged and expected to participate in the conversation. A short presentation in Italian will be required of each student by the end of the course.

**Both courses will be moderated by Cav. Frank Gargione, a Commissioner of the NJ Italian and Italian American Heritage Commission, a native of Italy fluent in Italian.**

<b>Italian Course Registration Form</b>		
Basic Italian [ ]	<i>check course</i>	Conversational Italian [ ]
Name _____		
Address _____		
Phone Number _____		
Email _____		
<b>Fee (\$25) Make Check Payable to MCIAFA</b>		



***Campanilismo***

In this column I would like to discuss the concept of Campanilismo, defined as an “exaggerated and narrow-minded attachment to one’s own city or town” and the deleterious effects that it has had and continues to have on all the Italians, both in Italy and in the rest of the world.

Campanilismo has been caused by historical and political events from centuries of history, starting from the fall of the Roman Empire, the subsequent settling of several Northern populations, and finally the rise, in the Middle Ages, of so many city-states, such as Florence, Genoa, Venice, Amalfi or kingdoms under the control of foreign powers, like the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies under the control of Spain, the Vatican States backed by France, the Piedmont under the House of Savoy, and the Lombard and Venetian regions under the control of Austria.

This was still the political situation in Italy before the Unification, achieved in 1860 by the Expedition of One Thousand led by Garibaldi under the auspices of the House of Savoy, even if it still did not include Rome, which was annexed in 1872. Before the Unific-

ation of Italy, the various governing bodies were always in some conflict among themselves, making it difficult for common people to move from one place to another, thus isolating the populations and keeping them in their native city or town. In these conditions, it was natural for each state to pro-claim itself superior to the others, especially when for the common people there was no information to the contrary. This series of circumstances encouraged the Campanilismo to such an extent that it has become part of the character of each Italian, so much so that almost no one calls himself Italian, while most call themselves either Roman, or Neapolitan, or Sicilian, or Calabrese or associated with some other region or city.

With this, I do not want to give the impression that one should not be proud of his or her place of birth, but when this tendency creates divisions among the various groups of Italians, especially in the United States, the result is the loss of the power that comes from the strength that the union of the Italians could have in the field of politics, entertainment, media, a power that could be utilized to obtain more advantageous conditions, reduce discrimination towards Italians, improve the image of Italians in the public opinion, reduce stereotypes, and in general increase the self-esteem of every Italian.

*Continued inside- back of Page 1*



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