



November | December
2023



Italia

NEWSLETTER of the ITALIAN WORKMEN'S CLUB

914 Regent Street • Madison, Wisconsin 53715

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President's Message

Where did the year go? Not long ago I became the new leader of our club. I had no knowledge of leading our club, but I learned in a hurry and I'm still learning every month. This year started off with a great Festa, thanks to the help of many of our members followed by our bus ride to the Roma Lodge Italian Festival in Racine, bringing our Flags of the twenty regions of Italy with us.



Next was our club picnic, a gathering of good will and fun. October will bring our Awards Dinner, honoring some of our members and continuing the wine making process. We finish the year with the Kid's Christmas Party and our last membership meeting – the Member's Christmas Party.

The Flags Of Italy

By David Rizzo

Anyone who has attended our Annual Festa Italia celebration over the years has probably witnessed a parade that takes place on Saturday in the middle of the afternoon. A bunch of people gather in the Culture Tent and eventually emerge, each carrying a wooden pole with a cloth image attached. They proceed in single file to the entertainment tent, usually led by a musician playing the accordion, or guitar. People listen intently as the individual bearers explain the unique characteristics of the twenty regions of Italy. The

entire event lasts about forty-five minutes, and everyone in attendance comes away with an appreciation for the many and varied qualities of these areas of Italy, much like the individual states in our country.

The 20 regions of Italy are: Abruzzo, Aosta Valley, Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Emilia-Romagna, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Lazio, Le Marche, Liguria, Lombardy, Molise, Piedmont, Puglia, Sardinia, Sicily, Trentino-Alto Adige, Tuscany, Umbria, Veneto.

However, did you ever wonder where these poles and cloth images came from? I recently sat down with a charming lady named Bonnie Savonne who offered a history lesson.

All I can say is it was a great year to be a member / leader of a great club! Merry Christmas and a great 2024.

Grazie 🇮🇹

Flags continued on page 6

Parli Italiano?

By Tom Smith

Do you speak Italian (parli Italiano)? While I speak a little of the language, I often wish I knew more. My Mother was the youngest of seven children and the only one who never learned the language. Her siblings were fluent, but my only exposure was during visits with the family in New York, where I never understood what was going on, with the exception of the occasional phrase or exchange during animated conversations between brothers or sisters that sometimes included words a child was never expected to hear or understand.

Italian was not a foreign language offered in my public school, only German or Spanish. With some German ancestors in my heritage I opted for German and – with the several years exposure I had during those years – decades later I still recall enough to get by, though hardly conversational. So in college I enrolled in two semesters of conversational Italian. A lifetime later I remember some, but not enough to carry on any kind of conversation.

Languages have always fascinated me, which got me to thinking about the native language of my maternal grandparents, who came to this country in the early 1900s. Like many things, it made me curious about the history of that language, so I decided to do a little research and thought I might share what I discovered along the way. For some this may be old news, but for others you may just be surprised.

Italian, or lingua italiana, is a Romance language that developed through a long and gradual process that began after the Fall of the Roman Empire in the 5th century. After the fall of the Empire, local forms of the language had an important role in society and everyday life. For several centuries and during the Middle Ages Latin was the dominant language used throughout European Universities and in the official acts and procedures of the Church. Italian evolved from the Vulgar Latin of the Roman Empire. Vulgar as used here does not refer to anything rude or coarse but rather the popular or colloquial Latin that was both controversial and imprecise. The only language that existed for a long time was spoken Latin, with speech evolving much faster than written language.

Beginning in the 13th century, volumes of literature began to be published in regional Italian. The largest amount and most significant contributions were made by Sicilian poets, followed by those from Tuscany including Dante Alighiere, Giovanni Boccaccio, and Francesco Petrarch. In fact Dante



Alighieri, author of the epic poem “La Divina Commedia (“The Divine Comedy”), is considered to be the Father of the Italian language.

Italian is a part of the Italic branch of the Indo-European language family, which includes other “romance languages” like Spanish, French and Portuguese. It is the official language in Italy and San Marino, as well as the primary language of Vatican City. But not all these languages are alike, as there are things that make



Italian different. The official Italian alphabet only has 21 letters. While all of these letters correspond to counterparts in the English language, 5 letters are conspicuously absent...j, k, w, x, and y.

Like English and most other languages, Italian uses nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and articles, but Italian uses a gender system that classifies some words as feminine and others as masculine. And almost all Italian words end in a vowel making it relatively easy to tell when a noun is masculine (ending in -o-) or feminine (ending in -a-).

The original Italian constitution did not explicitly express that Italian was the official national language. Italian was not made the official language of Italy until legislation passed by the Italian Parliament in 2007. For centuries, until the Unification of Italy in 1861, the country was divided into a number of different states. Unlike English, while there is the official Italian language, there are many regional variants and dialects. Dialects were used as the everyday language for

and local differences. By some counts, there are as many as 31 different variations/dialects spoken in Italy.

The six major ones include:

Sicilian – Spoken in Sicily and Cambria, Sicilian has an entirely different grammar system from standard Italian because it was inspired by other languages. Some studies suggest it may have been the first romance language to exist.

Neapolitan – Spoken in Naples and other parts of Southern Italy, as an important dialect Neapolitan the region of Campania passed legislation to make it a protected language.

Algherese – A variant of Catalan (a language introduced by Spanish colonists in the 1300s), it is spoken in the city of Alghero in Sardinia.

Sardinian – Also known as Sardu or Sardo, and the most similar to Latin, Sardinian is spoken by some 1.5 million people on the island of Sardinia.

Friulian – Spoken in the Friulia region of northeast Italy, this variant has a distinct sound influenced by Venetian, German and Slovene.

Venetian – With some 4 million speakers, spoken in the northeast of Italy located in the Veneto region.



In 1950, when the country was in a time of complete infrastructural, economic, social, and political reconstruction, less than 20% of the population spoke fluent Italian. The one single factor that contributed to the unification of the language was the introduction of television. The gradual spread of educational and linguistic programs in the years that followed did much to encourage the spread of a standardized Italian language.

According to a 2015 survey by the Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT), 45.9% of Italians speak only standard Italian, 32.2% alternate it with a dialect, and just 14% speak dialect only.

While not as common as English, Spanish, or French, it is estimated that there are more than 85 million people around the world who speak Italian, making it one of the more popular international languages.

I also learned that Italian has some unique words that aren't easily translated. For example, **abbocco**...a sudden bout of sleepiness after a hearty meal. Then there is **menefrehista**...a person who doesn't care. Lastly **gattara**...a woman who takes care of stray cats. And by the way, America is the Latinized version of **Amerigo**, the given name of the Italian explorer Amerigo Vespucci who is credited with recognizing that the continent explorers believed to be Asia was actually the "New World."

I may still try to learn this beautiful language. I'm told it can be done, and once you learn the gender system and verb conjugations it is supposed to get easier. I read that there are an estimated 427,000 words in the Italian language, but Italians only use about 6,500 of those in general conversation. Perhaps there is still hope for some of us! 🇮🇹



The Flags Of Italy *continued*



Photo above: Toots Caruso & Ron Viney discuss the layout.

Photo right: Jim Capacio, Toots Caruso, Helen Healy & Bonnie Savonne cut out the various shapes and letters.



Page 7 - Left: Bonnie Savonne, Jim Capacio & Helen Healy prepare the pieces for mounting.

Page 7 - Right: Toots Caruso & Dan Martinelli glue the pieces on the flag.

Italia

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It all started with a trip to the International Folk Dancers Convention in Iowa in 1985. The Italian Folk Dancers of Madison made the short journey west and enjoyed a camaraderie with other dance troops. They were very impressed with a Flag Ceremony presented by the Italian Folk Dancers of Iowa. So much so that they asked for pictures of the flags and some instructions on how to make them.

After returning to Madison, Bonnie's husband (and folk dancing partner) Ken figured out how much it would cost to make a set of flags and soon a fund raising effort led by fellow dancer Tony Guastella commenced. A marvelous woman and friend to anyone who met her, named Toots Caruso volunteered her home as the place where the flags could be made. A small group dedicated their avail-

able evening and weekend time to cut the fabric, glue the various pieces in place and press the fabric to permanently seal the images. Ken Savonne then got together with fellow dancer Dan Martinelli to purchase wooden poles from Menard's to attach the flags and make them suitable for carrying in a parade.

The flags were now ready for presentation at various celebrations, but information about each of the regions was still lacking. Bonnie spent hours in a library and copied information about each region on index cards. Frank Alfano from the IWC agreed to shorten the wording on the cards to allow any presentation to be informative yet able to be completed within a reasonable amount of time.

Here's a series of photos showing



the creation and presentation of the flags. It was truly a labor of love.

Although the Folk Dancers of Madison no longer perform at festivals, or parades their commitment and creativity nearly forty years ago produced the Flags Of Italy which continue to be used to inform and entertain at Festa Italia, The International Festival and other community events.

Our thanks go out to the trail-blazers who created the flags and proudly presented them over the years to audiences in Madison, Dane County and throughout Wisconsin. Here's one of the lists of flag bearers from 1992.

Ken Savonne, Tony Guastella, Dan Martinelli, Gary Nordness, Gene Friede, Ann Accardo, Joann Galisdorfer, Frances Platz, Dave Platz, Lucy Parisi, Ann McCreddie, Sara Bernhagen, Phyl Gandolph, Nichole Cuccia, Toni Nordness, Willow Sundance, Lorraine Paltz, Philona Friede, Maria Salvat, Bonnie Savonne, Teresa Polumbo, Jim Capacio, Helen Healy and Nino Parisi. ■■



Upcoming IWC Events

Children's Christmas Party

Sunday, December 17 — IWC Clubhouse

IWC/IAWC Christmas Party

Tuesday, December 19 — IWC Clubhouse

Christmas Party! - Mark Your Calendar!

Refreshments!

Games!

Children's Christmas Party

Gifts!

Special Performance!

Crafts!

Special Guest!



Presented by the IWC & IAWC

Sunday, December 17, 2023

1:00 - 3:00 pm

914 Regent Street, Madison (IWC clubhouse)

Bring your children and grand children!



Reservations are not Required for the Children's Party!

**Ross DePaola, Co-Chair
Mark Salerno, Co-Chair**



IWC Christmas Party!

IWC & IAWC Members + 1 Guest Are Invited!



Tuesday, December 19, 2023

6:00pm Social

7:00pm Dinner



Dinner Provided by Salvatore's Catering

IWC Clubhouse, 914 Regent Street



Ugly Sweater Contest!

Each entrant will receive a gift certificate to the Greenbush Bar or equivalent.

Winner will receive a bottle of Clubhouse Red plus a gift certificate.



Reservations are required.

Cost: \$25 Per Person

Reservations required by Friday, December 8th

IWC Christmas Party Reservation Form:

Name: _____

Total # Attending: _____ **x \$25 =** _____

Checks made out to IWC
Mail check to
Fred Underhill
1 Newport Circle
Madison, WI 53719

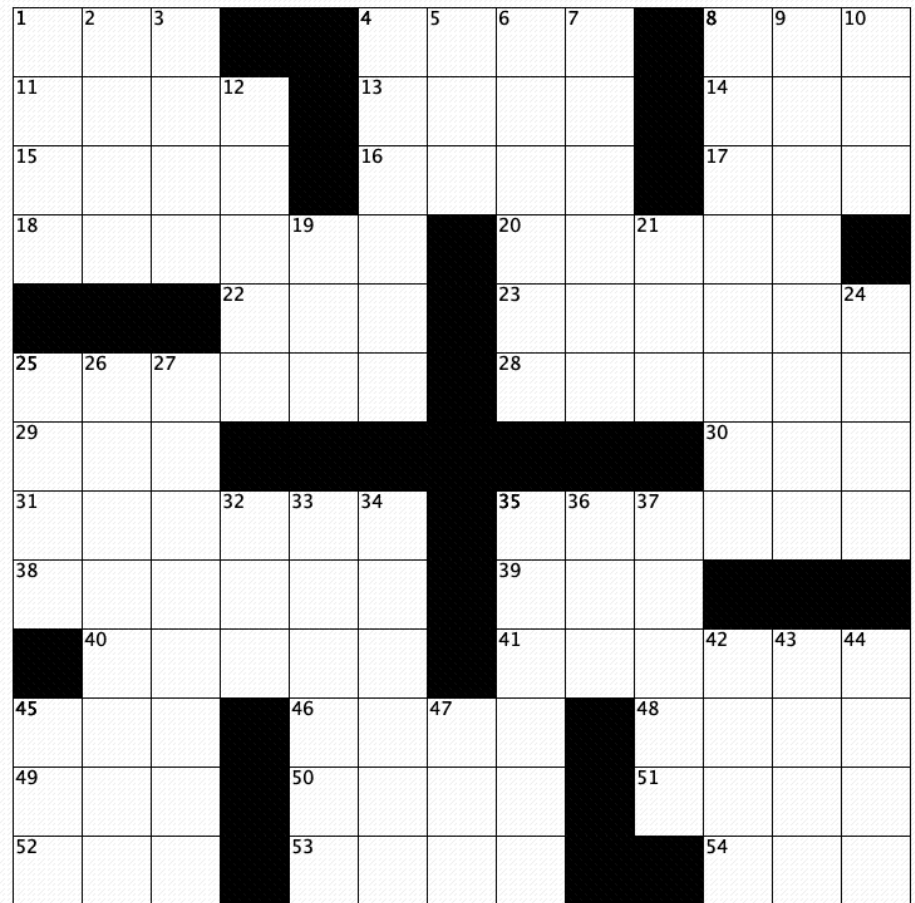
For event questions
call 608 271-4386

ACROSS

1. You put your ball on it
4. Hunger in Italian
8. Public Radio station
11. Start of a URL
13. Eve's partner
14. To do this is human
15. _____ retentive
16. Cow complaint
17. Kind of batteries
18. Japanese condiment
20. Key material
22. Military rank above Maj.
23. Summer Fall Winter or Spring
25. Fudd: "_____ Wabbit!"
28. Making a judgmental sound
29. Plural of is
30. O Mio _____
31. David Carradine starrer
35. Now they're Xs
38. Almost an MD
39. Computer port
40. Bygone abbreviation of the Golden State
41. Anchored
45. Active ingredient in Marijuana
46. Idiot
48. Not early
49. Meadow
50. Elmer's or Gorilla
51. What beavers give
52. Digital media
53. On pins and needles
54. Hirt and Jolson

DOWN

1. Melt



2. Vesuvius' Sicilian cousin
3. When planes are supposed to land
4. _____ Fued
5. Much _____ about nothing
6. Chinese Chairman follower
7. Computer chess tactics
8. Part of car next to the curb
9. Priest's advice
10. Short Line and Reading
12. Kind of setting
19. Silent actress Clara
21. Hard wood
24. Non Gov't Orgs
25. Pen name of H.H.Munro
26. Chewed noisily
27. Hertz or Avis
32. Keeps your hair in place
33. Keeps your food cold
34. Do this to a road map (remember that?)
35. Usual Thanksgiving entree
36. Weapons system officer
37. Nasty virus
42. Say it when you stick a landing
43. And others (Lat.)
44. Not Reps
45. Nurses deliver it
47. Toupee



IWC Birthdays

November

Raul De Luna	(3)
George Fabian	(3)
Darren Marabelli	(3)
Andrew Cusimano	(7)
David Lombardo	(7)
Jack Theel	(7)
Rick Bonanno	(10)
Kenneth Urso	(11)
David Rizzo	(11)
Daniel M. Amato	(13)
Mike Bender	(18)
Victor Lombardino	(22)
Mark Salerno	(23)
John Tobin	(25)

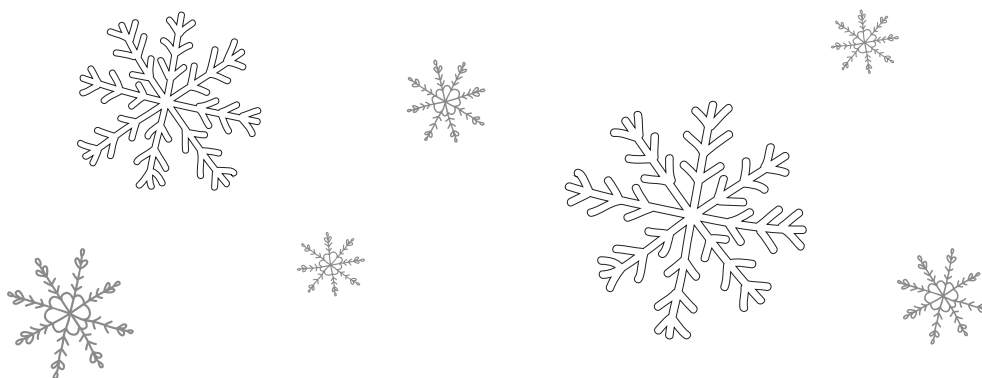
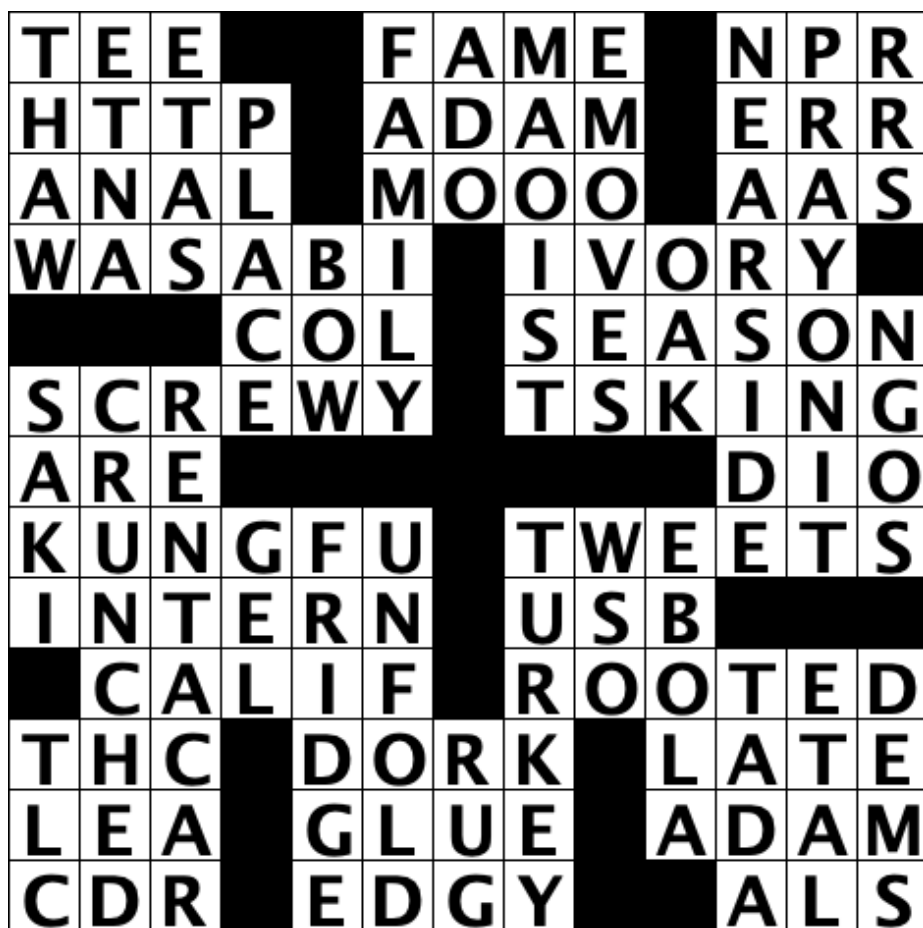
December

James S. Capacio	(1)
Tony Reitano	(2)
John Valenza, Jr.	(7)
Bennett Fraboni	(7)
Jack Zarovy	(7)
Patrick DePula	(9)
Joseph Rane	(10)
Dennis Di Carantonio	(18)
Robert Moccero	(21)
Dan Malone	(22)
John Sheehan	(24)
Vincent D'Orazio	(28)

IAWC Birthdays

Andrea Hunter	11/7
Terry Parisi	11/9
Rose Hoffhein	11/10
Debby Hillebrand	12/13
MaryAnn Berger	12/18
Jeanette Montalto	12/18

Solution



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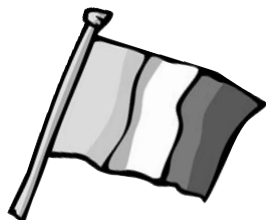
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Meeting Dates

- IWC Council Meetings – 2nd Tuesday of Each Month 7:00 pm
- IWC Membership Meetings – 3rd Tuesday of Each Month 6:30 pm

Please clip and post this calendar.



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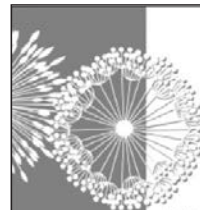
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