



September | October  
2024



# Italia

NEWSLETTER of the ITALIAN WORKMEN'S CLUB  
914 Regent Street • Madison, Wisconsin 53715

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## President's Message

Our Club has a lot to celebrate. We're putting the finishing touches on Festa finances and it looks like we're going to show a nice profit. Thank you to all members who helped out, and a special thanks to family members, relatives, neighbors and friends who pitched in.



Our historic brownstone is now listed in the National Register of Historic Places. A special thanks to Joe Tripalin and Jim LeTourneau for their tireless efforts in this matter. A bronze plaque will be mounted on the front of our building to commemorate this special designation.

The History Hallway and Mural are complete and ready for viewing in the Chapter Madison building on the 800 block of Regent Street. Together, they tell the story of the formation of the Greenbush Neighborhood. Go take a look. You won't be disappointed.

On a personal note, I won't be seeking another term as president of our Club. It's been my great honor and privilege to serve as president of the best club ever.

Grazie,  
John Caliva ■■

## National Landmark Status For the Old Brownstone

We are pleased and proud to announce that the Italian Workmen's Club was listed in the National Register of Historic Places by the Secretary of the Interior on July 24, 2024. This honor is the culmination of a process that seemed like an impossible dream.

Imagine, our clubhouse built by the hands of Italian immigrants on nights and weekends being considered for listing on the National Register of Historic Places!

Three years ago, we put together a preliminary application packet and met with an individual from

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# Italian Immigration – Our Common Roots

By Tom Smith

I was recently contacted by a cousin, who asked what I knew of our family history. Years ago I had done some research through records at Ellis Island and learned a little about my family's journey. My grandfather and grandmother were from a small city named Marzano di Nola. My grandfather started their emigration in 1902, alone on a steamship departing from Naples bound for New York and Ellis Island. His wife and the first two of what would be seven children followed in 1905. It's hard to imagine a 25 year old woman, likely booked in steerage or 3<sup>rd</sup> class (where accommodations were less than pleasant), traveling across an ocean on a steamship with a 4 year old and an 11 month old infant. Recently, in response to a post I made on a Facebook group in Marzano di Nola, I've added to that story thanks to a cousin who responded to the post, which encouraged more research.



Ellis Island – 1903

All this made me think about the members of the Italian Workmen's Club and our shared history. From our conversations over the years, many of you have traced your family roots back to Italy. But my recent activity and those conversations made me wonder, how many of us know about the history of Italian Immigration.

In 1870 there were only about 25,000 Italian immigrants in the United States. Many of them were refugees from Northern Italy that left amidst the struggle for Italian unification and independence. But beginning in 1890 Italian immigrants became part of what became known as the "New Immigration" – the third and largest wave of immigration from Europe, consisting of Italians, Slavs, and Jews (the "Old Immigration," which occurred earlier in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, was primarily Germans, Irish, British and Scandinavians). Between 1880 and 1920 over four million Italians immigrated to the United States.



Poverty, political turmoil, and high unemployment rates prompted many immigrants from Southern Italy and Sicily to seek a better life in America. Those from the South came from regions like Calabria, Abruzzi, Molise, and Apulia. Natural disasters also contributed to the desire to emigrate. Mount Vesuvius erupted in 1906, ejecting the most lava ever from a Vesuvian eruption and burying towns near Naples, followed by Mount Etna erupting. Then in 1908 the Southern Calabria-Messina earthquake, the strongest seismic event of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Italy, destroyed Messina and Reggio Calabria and produced multiple tsunamis, killing more than 100,000 people in the city of Messina alone.



From 1892 to 1924 many of those 4 million Italians were among the almost 12 million immigrants arriving at the Port of New York and processed at Ellis Island. The facility was authorized by the federal government in 1890 with buildings to be constructed for the processing of immigrants. The plans called for a main building and outbuildings that included a hospital, detention building, laundry building and utility plant. A ferry slip and breakwater were also to be built to the south of the island. The station opened on January 1, 1892. Though initial medical inspections were conducted by steamship companies at the European ports of embarkation, and further medical exams and vaccinations often occurred on board ship, before ships were allowed to enter the New York harbor they were required to stop at a quarantine checkpoint off the coast of Staten Island. There doctors would examine passengers for dangerous and contagious diseases –



plague, smallpox, cholera, and leprosy. Passengers were then transferred to small boats and brought to Ellis Island, where their first stop was a medical examination by military doctors. This became known as the “6 second physical.” If they found any sign of an illness or condition they would mark the person with a chalk mark on their clothing indicating the condition. The location was a code – for example, an X within a circle meant some definite disease, a B indicated back problems, an H heart problems, Pg for pregnancy, etc..

For most. Ellis Island was the “Island of Hope,” a place where they were processed within hours (though for some it could take days or even weeks) and it represented the gateway to a new life. No passports or visas were required, in fact there was little in the way of any paperwork at the time. Immigrants provided information to officials when they boarded their ship in Italy and that was the only information used when they arrived. Few were rejected, and once they “passed inspection” they were sent on their way. But for the two percent who were rejected, it became the “Island of Tears,” a place where families were separated and individuals were denied entry into the United States. The two main reasons for rejection were a diagnosis of a contagious disease that could endanger public health, or a concern from a legal inspector the person would become an “undesirable” (defined as someone who would become a public charge or illegal laborer).

## Our Common Roots continued

One of the biggest challenges Italian immigrants faced was discrimination. Native-born Americans viewed them as inferior and unwelcome, greeting them with hostility and prejudice. Living conditions were poor with many overcrowded tenements, which were essentially slums, in the larger cities. As a result Italian immigrants tended to cluster together in areas that became labeled as “Little Italys.” Access to healthcare was another significant problem. At the time about half of Italian immigrants were manual laborers. Sometimes contracted out by a professional labor broker known as a *padrone*, these Italians dug tunnels, laid railroad tracks, constructed roads and bridges, and erected some of the first skyscrapers. As many as 90 percent of New York City’s public works employees were Italians, and they were 99 percent of Chicago’s street workers.



Italian immigrants also played a critical role in the American Labor movement. Heavily involved in unions and strikes, they fought for better wages, improved working conditions, and higher safety standards. In 1911 the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire, which was one of the deadliest industrial disasters in the history of New York, resulted in the death of 146 garment workers (123 women and 23 men), most of the workers recent Italian or Jewish immigrants. This tragedy helped galvanize the labor movement and led to significant reforms in workplace safety and labor laws.



There are many who say the Italian immigrants who came to this country were not rejecting their homeland, but rather to preserve the Italian way of life...whether by sending money home to those left behind or to bring that way of life to America. They brought with them a rich cultural heritage, including their language, food, music and art. They played a vital role in building America’s infrastructure. They came, they struggled and established their families here, and in the decades that followed they prospered. We are the descendants of those immigrants. According to the 2022 American Community Survey, Americans of Italian ancestry are the country’s fifth-largest ethnic group.

When we reflect on our individual histories, we should remember all that our ancestors went through, all that they endured to come to this country. Had they not been willing to take the bold step of leaving Italy and coming to America, we would not be here today!



## Landmark Status continued

### IWC Birthdays

#### September

Carmelo Alfano	9/7
Michael Lumina	9/6
Jim Cerro	9/8
Jack Parrino	9/8
Doug Lucchesi	9/14
Tom Smith	9/14
Joseph Scalissi	9/16
John Benjamin	9/19
Rosario N. DePaola	9/21
Joseph P. Tripalin	9/21
Frank Ranallo	9/26

#### October

John H. Hunter	10/4
Travis J. Hunter	10/7
John Porco	10/9
Luigi Vitiritti	10/10
Donald J. Mash	10/12
Michael Schmidt	10/15
Steve Carrola	10/16
Andrew Lager	10/16
Joseph T. Parisi	10/24
Domenic Scudera	10/28
Steve Tortorici	10/30
Mike Cammilleri	10/31

### IAWC Birthdays

Suzy Harbort	9/7
Phyllis Masino	9/20
Victoria Szewczyk	10/4
Catherine Tripalin Murray	10/4
Jenna Kooker	10/19
Sandra Hunter	10/25
Santina Ciarletta	10/31



the historic preservation section at the Wisconsin State Historical Society. The meeting went well, and we were encouraged to pursue our goal for addition to the National Registry. After reviewing several providers to prepare our formal nomination, we chose Tim Heggland. Tim has a wonderful background in history, historical architecture, and is very familiar with the Greenbush neighborhood and its history. Tim prepared a 43-page document for the nomination of our clubhouse building for inclusion on the Wisconsin State Register of Historic Places and it was submitted to the Wisconsin State Historical Society.

Just before Festa this year, David Rizzo and Joe Tripalin (shown in the photo) attended the quarterly meeting of the Wisconsin State Historic Preservation Review Board. At that meeting, our representative, Tim Heggland, presented the nomination of the Italian Workmen's Club clubhouse building for inclusion on the Register of Wisconsin State Historic Places. Tim did a terrific job in his presentation and our clubhouse was awarded state historical status and placed on the Register of Historic Places in Wisconsin. Along with that status, automatically the details of our nomination and clubhouse building were forwarded to the National Parks Service to be included on the National Register of Historic Places.

We'll plan a celebration for this designation to honor those in our club who came before us and their determination to build a legacy. ■■

# IWC Elections

It's time for you to consider being a part of the leadership team for our club. This fall we'll conduct elections for the following positions:

- President
  - One two-year term
- Vice President
  - One two-year term
- Councilman At Large (1)
  - Two consecutive two-year terms

A nominating committee (David Rizzo - Past President, Mike Bender - At Large Council Member & Jack Theel - Member), has been formed. It will:

- accept nominations
- verify that candidates meet the minimum qualifications
- announce the candidates whose names will appear on the ballot at the September meeting of the General Membership
- provide absentee ballots upon request

Voting will take place at the General Membership meeting in October. NOTE: Absentee ballots will be allowed and provided on request for those unable to attend the meeting.

Members can nominate themselves, or recommend another member for nomination, but only after receiving permission from that member.

Candidates for President & Vice President must be members of the club for at least two (2) years and have held a Council position.

Candidates for the Council must be members of the club for at least six (6) months.

Newly elected individuals will take charge of their respective positions at the January Council meeting following the election.

Nominations should be:

- E-mailed to David Rizzo, [davidrizzo@me.com](mailto:davidrizzo@me.com)
- OR
- Mailed to the clubhouse, 914 Regent Street, Madison, WI. 53715

**Deadline for submitting nominations: Friday, September 13<sup>th</sup>.**

## Italia

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# ITALIAN WORKMEN'S CLUB SCHOLARSHIP (\$2,000)



**For students of Italian  
studying abroad in Italy  
in Spring 2025**

The Italian Workmen's Club (IWC) is a men's club of Italian heritage. The IWC has been in existence since 1912 and was started by Italian immigrants living in the Regent Street area of Madison. The IWC's mission is to preserve and promote the history, culture, language and traditions of Italians and Italian Americans and to express appreciation for and support the understanding of their impact in Madison.

The IWC will award a NEW Scholarship (\$2,000) to a student of Italian spending at least a semester studying abroad in Italy. Preference will be given to:

- Students pursuing a Major in Italian or a Certificate in Italian at the UW-Madison  
  
(any student who has declared the Italian Major or the Italian Certificate by November 2024).
- Students planning their first study-abroad experience in Italy.
- Students with at least a 3.0 GPA.

All students are encouraged to apply. Preference will be given to students of Italian heritage.

**Applicants need to submit a letter** (2 pages maximum) providing information about themselves, their Italian heritage (if applicable), their goals for studying abroad in Italy, their academic interests, and future career plans.

**Send the letter by email**, with subject line "IWC Scholarship Application," as an attachment to Mr. Joe Tripalin at [jptripalin@gmail.com](mailto:jptripalin@gmail.com)

**Deadline:** November 8, 2024

The successful recipient will be notified in December 2024 and will receive \$2,000 from the IWC to help offset study abroad expenses. At the end of the semester abroad, the successful recipient agrees to an in-person update for the IWC members and to send a one-two page final report about their study experience in Italy to IWC by email ([jptripalin@gmail.com](mailto:jptripalin@gmail.com)).

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# Things I didn't Know:

## Chapter 2-C; "Wage survival, increased discrimination, and more city services desired"

Written and edited by Prof. Jim LeTourneau, IWC

*As we continue to review and summarize the 278 page thesis of UW-Madison student, John Arthur Valentine written in 1964, we begin to delve into the more stable emergence of an Italian neighborhood more firmly established in the Madison community, but still facing many hardships. We will also begin to insert more information from the 1916, 72-page thesis about "The Bush" written by another UW-Madison graduate student, Henry Barnbrock, Jr.*

As referenced in our previous chapter summary, 2-B, St. Joseph's Church and school provided both a religious and educational outlet for those Sicilian Catholics. Despite its poverty, the school remained in existence until it, too, was demolished in the Madison urban renewal project of 1964. Although the parish realized financial solvency in time, the fact that it endured for over four decades is testimony to the tenacity of both clergy and parishioners of St. Joseph's Church.

As mentioned in chapter, 2-B, when Father Julius Neault arrived at St. Joseph's in 1928, the

church was \$ 20,000 in debt, a considerable sum in those days. Even before the Depression, the Italian's financial support was meager. For example, both the Christmas and Easter collections for 1928 were less than \$ 25.00. As expected, financial support during the Depression dwindled further. To be sure, Italians didn't have much money to contribute, but the Catholic community of Madison and the neighborhood Albanians didn't help, either. However, after World War II, the Italians were in a better financial position to help their Church.

Unfortunately, according to John Valentine, the outside Catholic community displayed little sympathy, if not hostility, toward the immigrant parish. And, some Albanians, true to their sentiments of "campanilismo", desired a church of their own. Consequently, they did not join St. Joseph's in any large number despite the efforts of Father Neault.

*Note: The desire of the Albanians to have their own church led to the establishment of the Italian Methodist-Episcopal Church in 1916, about two blocks east from St. Joseph's with its first pastor, Rev. Phillip Pallotta. By the time Father*

*Neault had arrived at St. Joseph's in 1928, many Albanians were attending the new Methodist Church at 103 S. Lake St., with its fourth and last pastor, the Rev. Antonio Parroni. More on this subject in coming chapters.) Although the sentiments of "campanilismo" divided the local Italians into segregated neighborhoods, clubs, societies and churches within "The Bush", the immigrants did share a common, economic pattern. Most of the Madison Italians had been forced to emigrate from Italy because of their dire economic position. According to Francesca Paratore, a "Bush" resident who was interviewed by both John Valentine and Henry Barnbrock, Jr., many of the original immigrants said "they wouldn't have come to America if food could have been obtained in Italy".*

Few came for any other reason than economic betterment. In his 1916 thesis, Barnbrock wrote of the Madison Italians..."The lure of political freedom in America did not attract them. Every home is decorated with pictures of the Italian royal family and the people delight in drawing attention to the merits of their king and queen. Neither did the opportunity for freedom of worship draw them to Madison for the local people

adhere to the accustomed religious ceremonies and faith”.

These people were accustomed to a small income and constantly lived on a margin of bare subsistence. During the early years of their settlement in Madison, the Italians were earning *from* \$.75 to \$1.25 a day. Francesca Paratore, had written in her booklet, “Pathetic Situation”... ” This was considered ‘gobs of money’ when compared to the \$.10 to \$.20 cents a day they had earned as tenant farmers in Sicily. Barnbrock himself, went on to write... ” Economic betterment dominates the motives impelling their activities and endeavors... The local Italians are aggressively taking advantage of good opportunities in Madison for improving their living conditions”.

In 1916, Barnbrock wrote... ”The average yearly earning for male Italians in Madison totaled \$ 510.00. This figure was higher than in most other American cities. For example, in a corresponding year, the average earnings were: Boston, \$338; Chicago, \$ 367; Cleveland, \$ 320; Milwaukee, \$ 309 and Philadelphia, \$354. New York City was the only exception to this pattern with an average yearly wage of \$ 526.” Yet this comparatively high-income figure did not indicate prosperity for the average Italian family in Madison. In fact, most families had to struggle for a bare subsistence. Using Barnbrock’s 1916 estimates, Valentine wrote that although an average income amounted to \$

510.00, the estimated budget for a family in the same year was \$ 563.

Certainly, according to Valentine, the estimated budget made by Barnbrock was not a large family allowance; it took into account the Italians’ frugality. It was necessary for families to practice such frugality because most work was seasonal and uncertain. It has been estimated that an Italian, in 1916, supporting a family of five could save one-third of his wages. A single man, boarding himself, could save three-fourths of his wages. Such stringent economy was imperative since money saved during the seasons of employment was required to tide a family over during the slack winter months or, in the case of a married man with family still in the “old” country, was enough to bring his family to America in a couple of years. Nevertheless, a yearly deficit of \$ 53.00 dollars in 1916 existed between the average family’s income and expenditures.

Many families simply did without during periods of unemployment. However, some essentials such as clothing, food and heat could not be ignored. The purchase of large amounts of second-hand, out-of-style clothing bought at church rummage sales considerably reduced their expenses. Barnbrock wrote in his thesis that “...home gardens, which virtually became an Italian institution, were an important means of supplementing their income. It was reported (in 1916) that every available plot in the

Italian community was converted into a garden”. Pilfering of coal from adjacent coal yards and along nearby railroad tracks was another common practice. During the cold winter months, when unemployment rates were highest, this petty thievery increased.

Not all families, of course, had to resort to second-hand clothing or pilfering of coal to make ends meet. For example, slightly less than a quarter of the Italian wage earners in the colony made over \$600 a year, a figure which placed them well above the average Italian family budget. However, the remaining three-quarters of these Italian families lived either on the margin or below subsistence levels. Fifty-three percent of these workers lived very near the margin at \$ 500-600 a year. The remaining, about 25-percent, earned under \$500, a year. Depending on individual family budgeting, some families could manage on an average income. Others, despite making more, didn’t do as well budgeting their money.

According to Henry Barnbrock’s wage scale research, the 1916 jobs and what they paid to Italians was revealing:

\$ 700 to over \$1,000 a year; carpenters, machine operators, adult industrial laborers and job foremen.

\$ 500 to \$ 700 a year: mechanics, barbers, masons, shoemakers, contract and some tobacco laborers.

Continued next page

## Things I Didn't Know

\$ 400 or less up to \$500 a year: railroad, contract and most tobacco laborers, young industrial laborers.

It was obvious from the above chart that if the Italians were to improve themselves economically, they had to move out of the common laborer category which included about 78.5 percent of the total male wage earner living in the Italian colony.

Another way in which an Italian wage earner might leave the laboring class was to establish their own business. In 1916, Henry Barnbrock surveyed the types of businesses owned by Italians within the colony:

There were 6 grocers; 3 each of shoemakers, contractors and barbers; and one each of bakers, butchers, fruit peddlers and shear grinders.

Thus, by 1916, almost 15-percent of the Italians were skilled and almost five percent were in business after nearly a ten-year residence in the US which is remarkable considering how many hardships they endured.

One factor which limited the number of Italian businesses was a lack of capital required to begin an operation. The economic condition of the community in general would only support a limited number of businesses. One possibility would have been for Italians to establish businesses outside their own community. However, as Barnbrock discovered, there was very little contact between the Italian settle-

ment and the outside community which often discriminated against Italians.

For example, an Italian barber, who was employed for several years in shops throughout Madison, had built up an American clientele. Desirous of establishing his own business, he decided to open his own barber shop on the fringe of the Italian colony so he might draw both American and Italian patrons. He found, however, that Americans refused to patronize an Italian shop.

Discrimination was also a major factor which prohibited the Italians' rise from the laboring classes. Sometimes this was based on justifiable grounds. For example, many businesses felt it was unprofitable to hire Italians who could not easily be trained because of the language barrier. Perhaps less justifiable but still rational, according to Barnbrock, there was discrimination because segments of American labor were fearful of competition and showed antagonism whenever Italians were advanced to the same work level as Americans. In fact, according to Barnbrock, "American laborers in some industries will not work with Italians. For this reason, employers say they must have either one or the other type of worker, not both".

Some discrimination was simply irrational. In many cases, Italians were competent in their field, could speak English, and were still not hired. Italian masons, for example, were the last hired and the first laid-off. Even railroads,

which were not reluctant to hire Italians, showed discrimination in promoting them. The same was true of the P. Lorillard Tobacco Company—a major employer of Italian labor. Located on a strip of land between the Milwaukee Road tracks and Proudfit St. on the eastern fringe of the Italian colony in Madison, it hired both men and women to handle tobacco plants coming from southern Wisconsin for cigars and later cigarettes like Lucky Strike and Pall Mall. Lorillard, like many other Madison employers, expected the Italians to remain in common laboring positions and avoided promoting them above this level.



*The P. Lorillard two-story warehouse was built in 1899 and still stands in Madison just west of the railroad tracks between W. Main St and North Shore Drive. It was converted into apartments now known as "Tobacco Lofts".*

Barnbrock observed that Italians, if given the opportunity, performed quite adequately and made this discrimination not only irrational but unfortunate. Those employers who showed toleration and willingness to experiment with Italian labor benefited. The French Battery Company (later Ray-O-Vac) had a mix of American and Italian labor groups. Its management found the Italians more steady and conscientious workers than those whom they formerly employed. As a result, the company hired Italians exclusively as most of its jobs required skilled labor which resulted in higher wages for many Italians.

Two local contractors hired only Italian laborers because the two companies felt the Italians to be superior workers. One of these men, John Icke, the former city engineer, had previously established a policy of later employing Italian workmen for his private construction company. It was Icke who allowed his Italian workmen to borrow some of the company's heavy equipment to put up the frame and scaffolding for the still-standing Italian Workmen's Club building. Barnbrock also mentioned in his thesis an unnamed carpenters union President who told him..."I could not ask for better workmen or more loyal unionists than the Italian carpenters we have in our organization".

Nonetheless, examples of this toleration are few. One of the major effects of employment discrimination was its contribution to the Italians adverse housing condi-

tions. Without adequate funds, most immigrants did not have the economic ability to improve their housing standards. Barnbrock wrote..."whenever the Italians can give their own individual expression to dwellings and are in a position to make alterations, their dwellings show a marked improvement in sanitary arrangements and general appearance". However, in general, employment discrimination was so pervasive, it limited the opportunity for home improvement.

It is difficult to understand how these Italians endured the housing conditions without a knowledge of the way in which peasants lived in Italy. In Sicily, for example, most peasant families lived in stone buildings and often-times, livestock was housed within the same building. In some cases, these buildings were kept immaculately clean, but on the other hand, some of the rooms were extremely unsanitary. Very few buildings had any more than a door as a possible opening for outside air. As for running water, only the rich were fortunate enough to possess it in the home. The others had to go every morning and get water with a bucket at the public fountain. The family washing had to be done in a nearby stream. Clothes were only changed after being worn for long intervals so that one did not have to continually run to the stream, especially in the winter.

Barnbrock was told by one Italian

lady..."Upon arriving in Madison, living conditions were worse here than they were back home. No one bothered about cleaning the rooms. The interiors were dark and dirty. No one cared to buy any more furnishings than those that were necessary since they were to be here for a short time." However, after 1914, most hopes of returning to Italy were abandoned and permanent settlement became an accepted idea. This was due to the Italian government penalizing every male emigree who did not respond to the colors and return home to fight for Italy in World War I with a stiff jail sentence. Consequently, most eligible young Italian men decided to stay in America and never return to Italy.

Barnbrock noted that over 50 percent of Italian houses were deficient according to a commonly accepted housing standard. In 1916, only one house in the whole colony had a furnace. All the others were heated by a coal stove, usually in the kitchen. There were only three bathtubs in the whole community. Several buildings, which had no running water, violated the City Housing code. Most of the houses, reminders of the George Praegler idea, were forty to fifty years old and in deplorable condition. Fully 63 percent of these dwellings had been moved to the Italian colony from other parts of Madison. Originally built for one family, many houses

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Continued next page

now accommodated two or three families. Deficient in window openings, plumbing alterations and structural conditions, these houses were unsanitary and barely habitable.

Henry Barnbrock wrote in his thesis that although Italians themselves contributed to this situation, Americans were more negligent. Most of these old homes were moved into the district by Americans and were sold to Italians for a quick profit. Many of the buildings were rented by landlords who perpetuated slum conditions by refusing to make adequate improvements. However, the major contributor to the slum-like appearance of the colony was the City Administration itself.

Due to “the expressed anti-dago sentiments of city officials”, the exterior condition of the community was ugly and disgusting. According to Barnbrock...”The Departments of Health, Streets and Buildings deliberately neglected the general health, sanitation and appearance of the Italian community”. Barnbrock continued that street improvements were severely neglected. In 1931, Francesca Paratore wrote in her booklet, “Pathetic Situation” of her speaking to an Italian who said...”When it rained the supposed street was just a vast mass of mire. In order to cross the street, planks were placed at various distances. Nine times

out of ten, one couldn't get across without falling in. In dry seasons, the same mud was dust which was blown into the houses”. Paratore's Italian observer, and others, also complained about the lack of streetlights in the neighborhood. It was not until 1934 that a major thoroughfare within the colony, especially near the intersection of Regent and Park Streets, was sufficiently improved to meet the satisfaction of the Italians.

The ugliest thing about the colony, according to Barnbrock, was the sickening sight and smell of many dumps scattered throughout the colony. There were three causes for the growth of these dumps and, according to Barnbrock, city officials were responsible for all three. Since the City refused to come into the colony to collect garbage and trash, Italians were forced to dispose of it in any nearby vacant lot they could find. Nor did local officials prohibit the outside American community—especially businesses—from dumping their refuse in the colony's vacant lots. Also, the City itself continued its policy of dumping trash on those same vacant lots in the colony. All this transpired despite continued protests and petitions from the Italian community as noted in Feb. 24 and May 11, 1916 articles in the Wisconsin State Journal newspaper. Most often, these petitions were summarily dismissed by the Madison City Commissioner who

purportedly said, according to Barnbrock, “There are only dagos living over there”.

One might well imagine what effect these dumps had on Italians' health. One visiting doctor was quoted...”There are epidemics in this neighborhood of pneumonia and intestinal disorders, particularly of the latter, which undoubtedly could be traced to the contamination from these disease infested areas. Dozens are affected with tuberculosis in some form or other. I have had as high as ten cases of pneumonia under my observation at one time during the last seven weeks, most of them tubercular in origin”.

According to Barnbrock, although plausible, it was extremely difficult to prove a direct cause and effect relationship between these diseases and the dumps. However, the dumps created one hazard to Italians' health which could be concretely proven, which was pointed out by another doctor...”Every load of garbage, refuse, ashes, etc. is carefully picked over by from ten to fifteen children of school age. It is almost a weekly occurrence to be called to attend a child having hands or feet cut by an old knife, razor blade, piece of glass or an old clock spring resurrected from these dump heaps”.

It was only after the outside Madi-

son community put pressure on officials that action was taken on petitions to clean up the dumps. In April 1916, thirteen different philanthropic organizations, under the guidance of Rev. Edward Blakeman of the University Methodist Church, united in an effort to abolish American owned and American developed dumps in the Italian colony area. In a November 7, 1918 Capital Times article, Rev. Blakeman was noted as one of the area clergymen involved in getting donations for clothing and other supplies to be shipped overseas to US soldiers fighting in World War 1.

**B**lakeman's organization to clean up the dumps was significant for another reason. It was part of a growing movement on the local scene which later became known as the Americanization crusade and was becoming a national effort. Beginning in 1914, many Madisonians began to look upon the Italians as their most important social problem. As a social entity quite different from the remainder of the Madison community, the Italian colony must have certainly been conspicuous.

In 1916, Henry Barnbrock wrote... "Not yet ten years old, this community exhibits characteristics of a frontier settlement. In number, its young people are preponderant. Over 80 percent of them are under thirty years old while 22 percent are under five. In marked contrast

to Madison's ratio of 92 males to 100 females, the ratio among Italians is seven to four. The unmarried men outnumber the unmarried women by a ratio of 30 to 1. Only five percent of Italians are over 40 years of age whereas the percentage of all of Madison's population over 40 is 20 percent. On the basis of age, sex and marital status, when compared with Madison as a whole, the Italian community is relatively a frontier settlement still in its early stages of development".

Barnbrock further observed..." The Italian community no longer lives in isolation. It recognizes an intermingling of interests with the larger community. In the progress outward and upward, the Italians are not deliberately forcing their inherited standards upon other residents. The majority are too young and plastic to have rigid and inflexible standards preventing new adjustments."

Italians were eager for economic adjustment, which had been a major factor behind their emigration. But John Valentine disagreed with Barnbrock when it came to opinions on Italian social assimilation. In talking to Madison's Italians, Valentine was told that in the early settlement years, Italians had not yet come in contact with outside people in any regularity. Italians were concentrated within themselves, and no Americans had anything to do with them. Ital-

ians had come in and duplicated their Italian villages in America and were extremely happy, but now those days were gone as the Americanization movement was adding pressure on Italians to open their colony.

Time would prove, however, that many Italians were not capable of making the social adjustment and needed guidance. The Americanization movement brought optimism as more and more organizations began working with immigrants. The Presbyterians and the Madison Women's Civic Club used studies as guides to future Americanization projects. By 1916, the value of Americanization work was generally accepted, and Henry Barnbrock's thesis was later instrumental in the formation of Neighborhood House, an institution designed specifically for Americanization work.

The Americanization workers had little success with the first-generation immigrants, but its early years of social reform activity were part and parcel of the growing Progressive movement. Madison, as the center of Wisconsin's Progressivism, was a particularly fertile area of reform. The problem was those progressive reformers believed they had sufficient knowledge to implement reforms and establish values superior to those

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## Things I Didn't Know

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that already existed. Illustrative of this were the Prohibitionists. They wanted to improve individual morality which is one reason why the Italian community was not allowed to have a saloon even before the enactment of the Eighteenth Amendment. Italians greatly resented this restriction. (*By its terms, the Eighteenth Amendment prohibited "the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors, but not the consumption, private possession, or production for one's own consumption"*).

This type of "superiority" action demonstrated little respect for the dignity of the Italians. These social workers believed they had the correct, if not morally right, solutions to the problems of the Italians. In short time, these views coalesced around an education movement which stressed the need to teach English, along with American government, values and customs to Italians. However, some fundamentally false assumptions surfaced. The first was that the reformers did not appreciate the progress Italians had already

made on their own. Italians were already learning to invest their money in order to eventually buy a home. Italians were also making educational adjustments. During the year 1915-16, 137 children were enrolled in Longfellow or St. James schools. This was vastly different from a child in Sicily who was lucky to attend one year of school and very fortunate to get three to four years of education. As further testament to adult desires to become Americanized, over 100 Italian workmen attended night school classes during this same time period.

However, according to Barnbrock, despite efforts to teach Italians American government and Italian residents going to day and night school to learn, Italians were systematically discriminated against, especially when compared to Teutonic, Scandinavian and English peoples. Between 1914 and 1916, only four Italians were naturalized. Discrimination from Madison city officials was so rank it embittered the Italians against local government they took little interest in

local or national politics.

Lastly, suggestions made by Italians to the reformers how to better teach Americanization subjects were ignored. Among the suggestions, capital be made available for someone to start a business; land be allotted for community gardens; less emphasis on cooking and housekeeping lessons in the American way, and having English teachers who also spoke Italian.

One idea pervaded the whole Americanization movement: making the immigrants undifferentiated from the general populace. This was pointed out to Henry Barnbrock who was talking to one Italian worker about another Italian immigrant. The worker said of the other..." I don't think he's Italian, he speaks good English".

*In the next chapter of "Things I Didn't Know", 3-A, we'll get into more detail of The Americanization Crusade of Madison's Italians, 1916-21, and the beginnings of Neighborhood House. Prof. Jim LeTourneau, IWC. ■*

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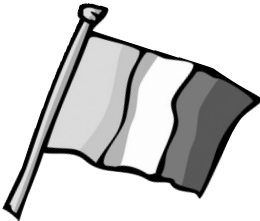
*We treat every family as our own . . .*

# Leave a Legacy

Members have expressed their desire to help the IWC. Not just being an active member or working a shift or two at Festa, but doing something that will leave a lasting legacy. If you count yourself in that group, consider a donation to the IWC as part of your estate when you pass on from our wonderful world. Your gift could be something as simple as a statement in your obituary that says “in lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Italian Workmen’s Club, 914 Regent Street, Madison, WI 53715”. You can specify the donations go to the club in general or directly to the scholarship fund. For larger gifts, language can be included in your will to specify a sum of money or other assets to be given to the IWC. This language should be coordinated with your will through your attorney.

Imagine what your gift can do to help the club and in turn help our efforts to provide scholarships and to keep our Italian heritage relevant in today’s world. Certainly, no one likes contemplating their passing, but this is a positive step you can take to make a difference and leave a legacy to your beloved club.





### Meeting Dates

- IWC Council Meetings — 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of Each Month 7:00 pm
- IWC Membership Meetings — 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of Each Month 6:30 pm

*Please clip and post this calendar.*



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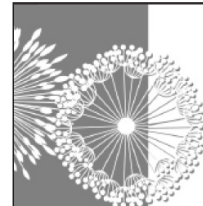
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## Italian Workmen's Club

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914 Regent Street, Madison, WI 53715  
Phone: (608) 258-1880, [www.iwcmadison.com](http://www.iwcmadison.com)

# WINE, PIZZA, AND A MOVIE!

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 21, 2024  
AT THE CLUB  
PIZZA AT 6:30 PM  
MOVIE AT 7:30 PM

Movie:

## *Pranzo di Ferragosto*

Gianni still lives with his mother in a condo but is behind in the bills.  
He soon finds a solution but also finds himself caring for a number of elderly  
mothers besides his own.

In Italian with subtitles

—

**COST PER PERSON: \$15**

**RESERVATIONS REQUIRED**  
**(SO WE KNOW HOW MANY PIZZAS TO ORDER)**

*Pay at Door*

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Number of people attending: \_\_\_\_\_

Names: \_\_\_\_\_

Please email or mail reservations to:  
Fred Underhill  
at [fauhill@gmail.com](mailto:fauhill@gmail.com)  
1 Newport Circle Madison, WI 53719  
**By Sept 14, 2024**

**If you signup but cannot attend let me know ASAP via phone (608 469-0436) or  
fauhill@gmail.com**



**2024 IWC & IAWC ANNUAL  
AWARDS BANQUET**  
**Sunday, October 13, 2024**



**Fabiola's**  
1301 Regent Street  
Madison  
4:00 PM Social Hr. Dinner 6:00 PM Program 6:45 PM

\$40 per Person / Cash Bar/ Casual Dress

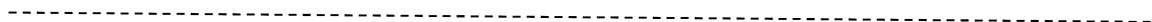
**Menu:**  
**Antipasto**  
***Fresh Bread***  
***Salad***

**Chicken Vesuvio, Sausage and Peppers and Penne Marinara**  
**Served Family Style with One Bottle of Chianti and of Pinot Grigio at Each Table**  
**Cookies and Mini Cannoli**

**Reservation Deadline is Saturday, September 14, 2024**

**Seating is limited so don't wait**

**Questions? Please contact Fred Underhill, 608-469-0436; fauhill@gmail.com**



**Reservation Form:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Number attending: \_\_\_\_\_ x \$40 = \_\_\_\_\_

***Please make check payable to IWC. Mail check and lower portion of this form to:***

***Steve Loniello, 440 Connie St, Cottage Grove, WI 53527***  
***by September 14, 2024***



## Italian Workmen's Club

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914 Regent Street, Madison, WI 53715  
Phone: (608) 258-1880

# Annual Award Nominations

### **Italian of the Year Award**

Given annually to a person in the community who has demonstrated dedication and untiring commitment to fulfillment of the mission of the IWC. This dedication and commitment shall be of a continual nature over a period of time. The Award may be given to more than one person in the same year. A person can also receive the Award more than one time.

### **Community Service Award**

Given annually to a person in the Dane County community who has supported the efforts of the IWC in fulfilling its mission.

### **Outstanding Service Award**

Given annually (posthumously) to a member who demonstrated dedication and untiring commitment to fulfillment of the mission of the IWC over an extended period of time.

### **Athlete of the Year Award**

Given annually to a High School, or Collegiate athlete in Dane County who has demonstrated athletic and academic excellence and has demonstrated a willingness to serve the community. There can be more than one award recipient in a given year.

### **Nominations should be sent to President John Caliva:**

- **E-mail**
  - [jcaliva58@gmail.com](mailto:jcaliva58@gmail.com)
- **OR**
- **Regular Mail**
  - **IWC 914 Regent Street, Madison, WI 53715**
  - **Attn: John Caliva**

**Deadline to submit nominations is Friday, September 20<sup>th</sup>.**



## Italian Workmen's Club

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914 Regent Street, Madison, WI 53715  
Phone: (608) 258-1880

### Italian of the Year Nomination Form

Nominee: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Italian Heritage:
  
2. Member of the Italian Workmen's Club:
  
3. Membership in other Italian Organizations:
  
4. Involvement with the Italian Workmen's Club:
  
5. Contributions and benefits to the Madison Italian American Community:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. Non- Italian American Community Involvement:

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Complete form and return by Friday, SEPTEMBER 20, 2024 to: Italian Workmen's Club • 914 Regent Street • Madison 53715 (or jcaliva58@gmail.com)**



## Italian Workmen's Club

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914 Regent Street, Madison, WI 53715  
Phone: (608) 258-1880

### Outstanding Service (posthumous) Award Nomination Form

Nominee: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Involvement with Italian Community:

Involvement with Greater Madison Community:

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Complete form and return by Friday, SEPTEMBER 20, 2024 to: Italian  
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## Italian Workmen's Club

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914 Regent Street, Madison, WI 53715  
Phone: (608) 258-1880

### Community Service Award Nomination Form

Nominee: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Involvement with Italian Community:

Involvement with Greater Madison Community:

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Complete form and return by Friday, SEPTEMBER 20, 2024 to: Italian  
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## Italian Workmen's Club

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914 Regent Street, Madison, WI 53715  
Phone: (608) 258-1880

### IWC Athlete of the Year Award Nomination Form

Nominee: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Athletic Achievements:

Scholastic Achievements:

Italian Heritage:

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Complete form and return by Friday, SEPTEMBER 20, 2024 to: Italian Workmen's Club • 914 Regent Street • Madison 53715 (or [jcaliva58@gmail.com](mailto:jcaliva58@gmail.com))**