



**THE NEW JERSEY  
ITALIAN  
and  
ITALIAN AMERICAN  
HERITAGE COMMISSION**



**REPORT and PROGRAM  
for the**

**April 24, 2004**

**Italian Liberation Day Commemoration**

*To Celebrate the Bonds of Friendship  
Between Italy and New Jersey*

## **Overview of 2004 Liberation Day**

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The New Jersey Italian and Italian American Heritage Commission, the Office of the Governor of New Jersey and its community partners hosted a successful commemoration of Italian Liberation Day on April 24, 2004 at the Governor's Mansion in Princeton, New Jersey. The celebration of Italian Liberation Day is designed to remember the shared sacrifices and the bonds of friendship between the citizens of Italy, the United States and the State of New Jersey. The event is the only statewide commemoration of its kind in the State of New Jersey and has been organized for the past several years.

## **Commission Partners**

As the event is intended for the Italian American community of the entire State, the Office of the Governor reached out to various Italian American organizations for planning, financial and logistical support. This year six organizations joined the Commission: the New Jersey Italian American Heritage Foundation, the Coccia Institute, the Elizabeth Chapter of UNICO, the Bianchi Lodge of the Order of the Sons of Italy, the Ribera Italian American Club, and the Sicilian Federation.

## **Selection of Speakers**

As this event is a formal statewide event, speakers were carefully selected for the ceremonies. In addition to Governor McGreevey, who hosted the event, Former Governors Donald DiFrancesco and James Florio were invited to represent the New Jersey Government, while Consul General of Italy Antonio Bandini was invited to represent the Italian Government in New Jersey. In addition, the Vatican Envoy to the United Nations, Archbishop Celestino Migliore, was invited for the invocation and the benediction.

## **Selection of Entertainment**

The event was designed to incorporate entertaining interludes interesting to a wide audience range. The Commission invited tenor Nino Rossano to sing the Italian and American national anthems and the Coro Lirico opera choir to perform various operatic choral pieces. Mr. Joseph Piscopo was invited to make some remarks and to lead the American pledge of allegiance, while Mr. Angelo Bianchi was invited to read his poem, "I am an Italian American".

## **Ceremonies**

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As the climax of this event was a flag-raising ceremony on the front lawn of the Governor's Mansion, the Association of Italian Carabinieri from New York were invited to bear the Italian colors in full uniform.

Following the pledge of allegiance, the guest speakers remarked on the relations between Italy and the State of New Jersey and on the need to preserve the Italian culture. Musical interludes and the poetry reading bracketed the speakers. Governor McGreevey provided the keynote address and then led the crowd to the front lawn for the flag-raising ceremony. Mr. Nino Rossano then delighted the audience with renditions of famous Italian folk songs.

## **Attendees**

Over 1,000 individuals registered for the event and at least 750 Italian and Italian American citizens attended the ceremonies. Extremely positive feedback was received from the attendees regarding the ceremonies and all enjoyed the Governor's Mansion. The event was the most well-attended Italian Liberation Day Commemoration in the State of New Jersey.

## Overview of Italian Liberation Day

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Italian Liberation Day, also known as the Celebration of the Resistance in Italy (“Festa della Resistenza”), is celebrated on April 25 of each year in Italy. This historic day memorializes Italy’s proclamation of a national popular rising against German occupation forces and the remnants of Mussolini’s Fascist Government, which were defeated through the combined efforts of Allied military forces and the Italian Resistance. It is a day of celebration, but also of mourning and remembrance as over 312,000 Allied troops and over 100,000 Italian citizens lost their lives in fighting for a free, democratic Italy.

For Italians, the Liberation of Italy vindicated the virtues of justice, liberty, solidarity and democracy. On this day, the values of the Risorgimento, that historical process of unifying Italy, is again celebrated. On this day, the more than 400,000 Resistance fighters and supporting civilians are remembered for their hardships and struggles in bringing Italy back into the league of free nations. And on this day, Italians remember their bond of friendship and their shared common values with the citizens and government of the United States.

For Americans, Italian Liberation Day is a day to proudly celebrate Italy’s efforts to throw off the yokes of Fascism and Nazism. It is also a day to remember the sacrifices born by the soldiers and citizens of the United States in the Second World War, as over 114,000 Americans lost their lives in the Italian campaign in such places as Salerno, Monte Cassino, Anzio and the Volturno River. It is a day to remember the bonds of friendship and shared common values with the Italian people.

***“The State of New Jersey, having served as the gateway for so many groups of immigrants coming to this nation in search of freedom and opportunity, is indeed a state rich in ethnic diversity and heritage. Today, we celebrate our Italian American community for the immeasurable contributions which Italian Americans have made to the social, cultural and economic fabric of our great state.”***

**Governor James E. McGreevey**

## SPECIAL THANKS

### **To the Sponsoring Organizations**

New Jersey Italian and Italian American Heritage Commission  
New Jersey Italian American Heritage Foundation  
The Sicilian Federation  
The Ribera Italian American Club  
Elizabeth Chapter of UNICO National  
The Coccia Institute  
Cav. Dottore Angelo R. Bianchi Lodge #2654, Order of the Sons of Italy in America

### **To the Italian Liberation Day Steering Committee**

Mr. Larry Paragano, Dr. Robert Freda, Mr. A. Roger Marinzoli & Ms. Gina Pezzicola  
Mr. Angelo Bio  
Mr. Sebastian Russo and Jack Russo  
Mr. Paul Rinaldi and Mr. George Marretta  
Mr. Bob Bonsignore  
Mr. Peter Agliata and Mr. Jimmy Fodera  
Mr. Joseph Coccia and Dr. Gina Miele  
Mr. Robert Bianchi

### **For Organization & Coordination**

Governor James E. McGreevey  
Mr. Herb Gilsenberg  
Ms. Michelle Kim  
Ms. Olga Nini  
Mr. Angelo Bio  
Mr. Larry Paragano

### **For Donations & Contributions**

Mr. Sebastian Russo and Jack Russo, *Villa Borghese in Fords*  
Mr. Gerald Frungillo and Mr. Ben Frungillo, *Frungillo Catering Design in Montclair*  
Mr. Jack DiPiazza, *Leonard Novelty Bakery in Moonachie*  
Mr. Antonio Pantussa, *Filo D’Oro Crystal and Fine Porcelain in West Patterson*

### **For Performances & Ceremonies**

Coro Lirico Chorus, conducted by Mr. Italo Marchini  
Mr. Nino Rossano & Mr. Joel Zelnick  
Ms. Jennifer Paragano  
Associazione Nazionale Carabinieri D’Italia

### **Special Mentions**

Mr. Giorgio & Ida Marinzoli  
Mr. Joseph Marinzoli, *Old Bridge District Department of Italian*  
Mr. Peter Tarquinio, *Italia-Oggi*  
All of the Volunteers that assisted on April 24, 2004

# ***“I am an Italian American”***

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## **PROGRAM OF EVENTS**

### **WELCOME**

**N. Larry Paragano, Chairman**

*New Jersey Italian & Italian American Heritage Commission*

### **INVOCATION**

**His Excellency, Archbishop Celestino Migliore**

*Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations*

### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & NATIONAL ANTHEM**

**Mr. Joseph Piscopo & Mr. Nino Rossano**

### **POETRY READING: “I AM AN ITALIAN AMERICAN”**

**Mr. Angelo Bianchi, Esq.**

### **REMARKS**

**The Honorable James J. Florio, Former Governor of NJ**

**The Honorable Donald T. Di Francesco, Former Governor of NJ**

### **MUSICAL INTERLUDES**

**Coro Lirico, Directed by Mr. Italo Marchini**

**Ms. Jennifer Paragano, Soloist**

### **GOVERNOR’S ADDRESS**

**The Honorable James E. McGreevey**

*Governor of the State of New Jersey*

### **KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

**His Excellency, Antonio Bandini**

*Consul General of the Republic of Italy in New York*

### **ITALIAN FLAG RAISING CEREMONY**

**Associazione Nazionale Carabinieri D’Italia, Color Guard**

**Mr. Nino Rossano, Italian National Anthem**

### **MOMENT OF SILENCE & BENEDICTION**

**His Excellency, Archbishop Celestino Migliore**

### **CLOSING REMARKS**

**N. Larry Paragano**

I am an Italian American. My roots are deep in an ancient soil, drenched by the Mediterranean sun, and watered by pure streams from snow-capped mountains.  
I am enriched by thousands of years of culture.  
My hands are those of the mason, the artist, the man of the soil.  
My thoughts have been recorded in the annals of Rome, the poetry of Virgil, the creations of Dante, and the philosophy of Benedetto Croce. I am an Italian American, and from my ancient world, I first spanned the seas to the New World.  
I am Cristoforo Colombo.  
I am Giovanni Caboto, known in American history as John Cabot, discoverer of the mainland of North America.  
I am Amerigo Vespucci, who gave my name to the New World, America.  
First to sail on the Great Lakes in 1679, founder of the territory that became the State of Illinois, colonizer of Louisiana and Arkansas, I am Enrico Tonti.  
I am Filippo Mazzei, friend of Thomas Jefferson, and my thesis on the Equality of Man was written into the Bill of Rights.  
I am William Paca, signer of the Declaration of Independence.  
I am an Italian American. I financed the Northwest Expedition of George Rogers Clark and accompanied him through the lands that would become Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin and Michigan. I am Colonel Francesco Vigo.  
I mapped the Pacific from Mexico to Alaska and to the Philippines.  
I am Alessandro Malaspina.  
I am Giacomo Beltrami, discoverer of the source of the Mississippi River in 1823.  
I created the Dome of the United States Capitol. They called me the Michelangelo of America.  
I am Constantino Brumidi.  
In 1904, I founded in San Francisco the Bank of Italy, now known as the Bank of America, the largest financial institution in the world. I am A.P. Giannini.  
I am Enrico Fermi, father of nuclear science in America.  
First enlisted man to win the Medal of Honor in World War II, I am John Basilone of New Jersey.  
I am an Italian American. I am the million strong who served in America’s armies and the tens of thousands whose names are enshrined in military cemeteries from Guadalcanal to the Rhine.  
I am the steel maker in Pittsburgh, the grower in the Imperial Valley of California, the textile designer in Manhattan, the movie maker in Hollywood, the homemaker and the breadwinner in 10,000 communities.  
I am an American without stint or reservation, loving this land as only one who understands history, its agonies and its triumphs, can love it and serve it.  
I will not be told that my contribution is any less nor my role not as worthy as that of any other American.  
I will stand in support of this nation’s freedom and promise against all foes.  
My heritage has dedicated me to this nation.  
I am proud of my full heritage and I shall remain worthy of it.  
I am an Italian American.

***Angelo Bianchi, Esq., 1992***

## Italian Liberation Day History

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## Italy and New Jersey

Under Benito Mussolini, the Italian government allied with Germany and other Axis Powers during World War II. In the afternoon of July 25, 1943, Italy's formal sovereign, Victor Emmanuel III, dismissed Benito Mussolini as chief of the government and ordered his arrest. Marshall Badoglio was called to preside at a Government Cabinet mainly formed by professionals. Meanwhile, Italian opponents of the fascist regime applied pressure for the immediate elimination of fascism, separation from Germany, and the pursuit of an armistice with the Allied governments to reach a separate peace treaty later. In response to the Italian government's moves to remove Mussolini from power, Hitler occupied Italy.

The governments of the United States and Great Britain responded to the dismissal of Mussolini by requiring Italy to surrender unconditionally to the Allied Forces. This Anglo-American request for unconditional surrender made negotiations more difficult and protracted, and it was decided that the Allies should enter Italy and that the armistice should be announced around the middle of September. As German forces fortified positions, the Allied troops moved to land in Sicily.

In September, 1943, as Allied Forces continued landings in Sicily, the Italian Resistance began to form partisan units all over Italy to support the expulsion of German occupation forces. The Resistance was created not merely as a military force, but a wide political movement that expressed national regeneration and rejected fascism and Nazism. It was a movement of workers, fighters, peasants and priests.

On September 12, a German raid freed Mussolini from the jail in which he had been imprisoned. On his arrival in Munich, Germany, Mussolini reconstituted the Fascist Party, proclaiming allegiance to his former republican and socialist programs while laying the blame for the defeat on betrayers and saboteurs. From this program, on September 23, the "Italian Social Republic" was formed under the German Army occupation. Meanwhile, in the South, a government led by Badoglio was constituted. This provisional government declared war on Germany on September 13 and was acknowledged as a "co-belligerent" by the Allies.

The advance of the Allied armies towards the North was stopped for the first time during the winter 1943-1944 on the "Gustav Line" and the second time during the winter 1944-1945 on the "Gothic Line". After an adjustment phase during the first winter, the partisan fight joined with this advance and, after Rome's liberation, became more active with the consequent formation of the National Liberation Committee and the assignment of special powers in regard to Northern Italy, which was still under German occupation.

The spring of 1945 brought the renewal of the war activity on every front of the European zone; in Italy the breaking of the "Gothic Line" took place. The Allied armies, with the participation of the Italian Liberation Corps and the partisan brigades, broke into the Padana Valley. On April 25, the Volunteers Corps for Freedom ordered the popular rising, which is commemorated today as Italian Liberation Day. On May 6, 1945, Germany surrendered.

On June 2, 1946, a referendum on the monarchy resulted in the establishment of the Italian Republic, which led to the adoption of a new constitution on January 1, 1948. Under the 1947 Peace Treaty, minor adjustments were made in Italy's frontiers with France, the eastern border area was transferred to Yugoslavia, and the area around the city of Trieste was designated a free territory. In 1954, the free territory, which had remained under the administration of U.S.-U.K. forces was divided between Italy and Yugoslavia. This arrangement was codified in the Italian-Yugoslav Treaty of Ossimo. With these governmental and territorial adjustments, the postwar Republic of Italy came into being.

Today, Italy is one of the world's most diverse nations – culturally, economically, and politically – and ranks as the world's fifth-largest industrial economy. Italy belongs to the Group of Eight (G-8) industrialized nations and is a leading member of the European Union and the OECD.

Italy's rich history generated monumental achievements that exerted a tremendous and lasting influence on the subsequent development of Western civilization and global history. The ancient, medieval, Renaissance, modern and 20<sup>th</sup> century periods of the Italian past gave birth to thinkers, inventors, artists and leaders in diverse fields such as civics, art, literature, science, technology, medicine, economics, philosophy, theology, engineering, architecture, music, cuisine, fashion and language. Few nations can lay claim to the wealth and diversity of contributions of the Italian people.

The legacy of these achievements and contributions of Italians continued from the Old World into the New World. During the formative years of the United States, Italian immigrants influenced the creation of the American Republic and contributed to the development of the economy, society and the arts. Today, Italian Americans have risen to the highest levels of government, business, education, arts and science.

The State of New Jersey is home to many individuals who are proud to call themselves Italian Americans. The 2000 census counted over 1.5 million citizens in New Jersey claiming Italian ancestry, but other estimates deem that number to be approximately 2 million. Most of New Jersey's universities have Italian language programs and over 300 public school districts have certified Italian language teachers. Italy serves as New Jersey's top 11 export markets, with \$2.4 billion exported to Italy in the last four years. New Jersey also captures much of Italy's \$25 billion worth of annual imports to the United States through its airports, port facilities and free trade zones. Many Italian citizens today still move to New Jersey for academic, professional or familial reasons and an even larger number of New Jersey citizens travel to Italy to study, visit families, tour the Italian peninsula or search their ancestral roots.

With younger generations of New Jersey Italian Americans seeking to keep their heritage alive, the bonds of history, family and friendship between Italy and New Jersey can continue to strengthen and flourish.



## The Italian National Anthem: Inno di Mameli (1847)

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Fratelli d'Italia  
L'Italia s'è desta  
Dell'elmo di Scipio  
S'è cinta la testa.  
Dove'è la Vittoria?  
Le porga la chioma;  
Chè schiava di Roma  
Iddio la creò.  
Stringiamoci a coorte,  
Siam pronti alla morte:  
Italia chiamò!

Italian brothers,  
Italy has arisen,  
With Scipio's helmet  
binding her head.  
Where is Victory?  
Let her bow down,  
For God has made her  
The slave of Rome.  
Let us gather in legions,  
Ready to die!  
Italy has called!

Noi siamo da secoli  
Calpesti e derisi,  
Perchè non siam popolo,  
Perchè siam divisi;  
Raccogliaci un'unica  
Bandiera, un speme;  
Di fonderci insieme;  
Già l'ora suonò.  
Stringiamoci a coorte,  
Siam pronti alla morte:  
Italia chiamò!

We for centuries  
Have been downtrodden and derided,  
Because we are not a people,  
Because we are divided.  
Let one flag, one hope  
Bring us together;  
The hour has struck  
For us to join forces.  
Let us gather in legions,  
Ready to die!  
Italy has called!

## Va, Pensiero: From Verdi's Nabucco (1851)

Va, pensiero, sull'ali dorate;  
va, ti posa sui clivi, sui colli  
ove olezzano tepide e molli  
l'aure dolci del suolo natal!  
Del Giordano le rive saluta,  
di Sionne le torri atterrate.  
Oh, mia patria sì bella e perduta!  
Oh, membranza sì cara e fatal!  
Arpa d'or dei fatidici vati,  
perché muta dal salice pendi?  
Le memorie nel petto raccendi,  
ci favella del tempo che fu!  
O simile di Solima ai fati  
traggi un suono di crudo lamento,  
o t'ispiri il Signore un concento  
che ne infonda al patire virtù!

Fly, thought, on wings of gold,  
go settle upon the slopes and the hills  
where the sweet airs of our  
native soil smell soft and mild!  
Greet the banks of the river Jordan  
and Zion's tumbled towers.  
Oh, my country, so lovely and lost!  
Oh, remembrance so dear yet unhappy!  
Golden harp of the prophetic wise men,  
why hang so silently from the willows?  
Rekindle the memories in our hearts,  
tell us about the times gone by!  
Remembering the fate of Jerusalem  
play us a sad lament  
or else be inspired by the Lord  
to fortify us to endure our suffering!



## **Italian Liberation Day** **COMMEMORATION**

**A Celebration of Italian and Italian-American  
Heritage**

*The Governor's Mansion*  
*Drumthwacket*  
*354 Stockton Street*  
*Princeton, New Jersey*

**April 24, 2004**  
**10:00 AM**

**JAMES E. MCGREEVEY**  
**GOVERNOR**