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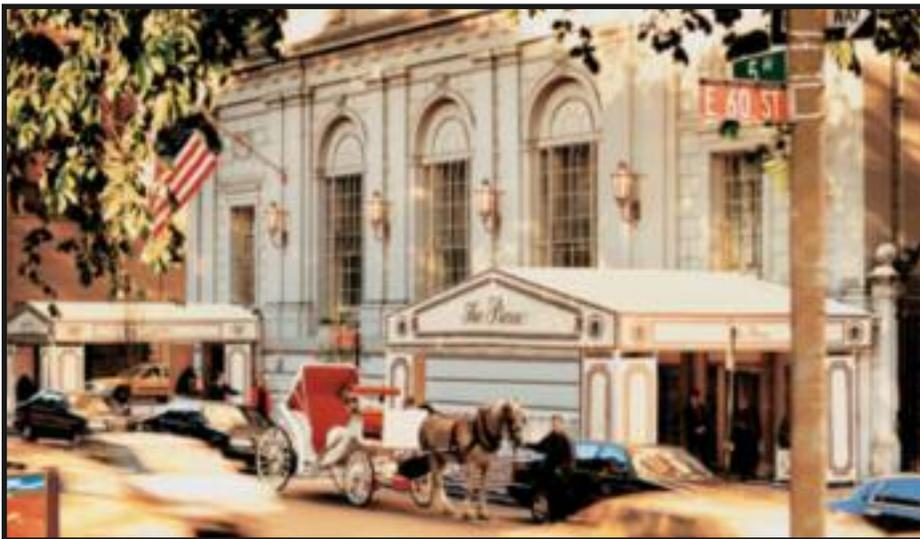
IL CAVALIERE

OFFICIAL BULLETIN OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF THE ITALIAN LEGIONS OF MERIT

HOLIDAY ISSUE

WISHING ALL OUR MEMBERS A WONDERFUL HOLIDAY SEASON

THE 49TH ANNUAL ASILM GALA DINNER DANCE & AWARDS CEREMONY



The ASILM Gala will be held in the beautiful Pierre Hotel in New York City on Thursday, February 19, 2015.

The most exciting evening in ASILM Gala history will take place at The Pierre Hotel in Manhattan on Thursday, February 19, 2015. With famous honorees and multiple features showcasing the best of Italian excellence, the 49th Annual ASILM Gala Dinner Dance & Awards Ceremony will be an event not to be missed.

The program will feature a cocktail reception, an authentic Italian four-course dinner, a large selection of the finest wines from across Italy, an awards ceremony honoring prominent

individuals from Italy and the United States, a spectacular auction of 1985 vintage Italian wines, a variety of music performed live by Panorama Music, dancing, and more.

Further enhancing the evening, the Gala will be held for its third consecutive year in the luxurious setting of the Grand Ballroom of The Pierre, an elegant five-star hotel opposite Central Park, and one of the most iconic hotels in New York City.

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I CAVALIERI IN AMERICA

All ASILM recipients of decorations from the Italian Republic will soon be featured in an elegant and resourceful book created by ASILM, tentatively titled *I Cavalieri in America*.

The comprehensive volume, never before assembled, will represent a milestone in the history of decorative orders of the Republic, as well as of the Society itself.

It will be the first complete record to showcase exactly who has been decorated by the Italian Republic, which decorations were received, and the city and state where each member resides. The book will thus be a vital resource of information, and so much more.

I Cavalieri in America will give exceptional recognition to each of the “decorati,” emphasizing their names, pictures, and biographies to the most prominent leaders in Italy, as well as to the hundreds of fellow decorated members residing in the United States. The great accomplishments and the recognitions received by the “decorati” will become widely circulated in the U.S., Canada and Italy.

The Society is presently editing the book in order to publish it by May 2015, prior to the

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WANT TO SUBMIT YOUR NEWS?

For members who wish to submit their recent honors or activities to be included in the next issue of Il Cavaliere, please do not hesitate to e-mail president.asilm@yahoo.com. This information will also be placed in the "Member News" page of the website of the Society: www.asilm.org, unless otherwise specified.



ASILM

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF THE
ITALIAN LEGIONS OF MERIT

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SPECIAL PROGRAM FOR THE NEXT VIP TRIP TO ITALY



*Next June, members of ASILM will visit Rome and other cities in Northern Italy to meet with officials, present *I Cavalieri in America*, and attend EXPO 2015 in Milan.*

Plans are underway for a June 2015 VIP trip to Italy, specially reserved for ASILM members, to coincide with the June 2 celebration of the anniversary of the Italian Republic.

This one-of-a-kind trip will be divided into two parts: Part I (May 30 - June 5, 2015) will focus on official meetings in Rome and the presentation of the book, *I Cavalieri in America*; and Part II (June 5 - 10, 2015) will feature excursions to cities across the northern region of Italy, ending with a visit to the EXPO 2015 in Milan.

The stay in Rome will provide participants with rare opportunities. Members will attend special events, including the military parade celebrating Italy's anniversary. Moreover, members will attend private meetings with top Italian officials; and, in light of the country's celebration of its history and heritage, they will be a significant part of the formal presentation on the highly-anticipated book, *I Cavalieri in America*, to hundreds of the most distinguished Italian VIPs and press at a lavish reception.

In addition to staying in the most elegant hotels, members will have formal lunches and dinners.

With all of these special activities planned for next June, this unprecedented program promises to be an unforgettable and worthwhile experience for all ASILM participants.

The trip will follow in the steps of the previous successful trips of ASILM to Rome in November 2011, and to Sicily in March 2013.

Thanks to sponsorships, the cost of the trip to Rome (Part I) has been contained at around \$2,500 per person (double occupancy), and will maintain the elegant and comfortable standards of the previous trips. The land package for Part I includes hotel room(s), daily breakfasts in the hotel, restaurant meals, and all private coach transportation for transfers and excursions indicated in the program.

By participating in this trip, members will play an important role in the pres-

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GIVE THE GIFT OF A DONATION TO THE ASILM EDUCATION FUND

The Society is pleased to announce that the ASILM Education Fund is officially open for donations from members.

This recently-established scholarship fund is dedicated to financing scholarships for undergraduate college students interested in pursuing degrees in the Italian language.

With the rising costs of college tuition, and decreased state support, scholarships are becoming increasingly essential in helping students get into the college of their choice and pursue their passion. Too many hard-working students who deserve to go to college and study their desired major end up not doing so because of their economic situations. ASILM is proud to set up this fund to help secure a successful future for these students.

While the Society is focusing on guaranteeing a college experience for a select number of students, it is simultaneously encouraging the study and use of the Italian language in the United States, which has always been an important goal of ASILM.

ASILM has made its initial contribution of \$25,000.00 to the fund.

The fund is open to tax-exempt contributions from ASILM members and friends who wish to support the initiative to promote Italian education of qualified students.

Members are thus invited to contribute to this scholarship fund and help make someone's dream of majoring in the Italian language come true. They can do this by sending a check made out to the American Society of the Italian Legions of Merit.

Members who donate to the fund thus play a pivotal role in ensuring its success, and may be instrumental in persuading as many people as possible to participate.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 9)



(49th ASILM Gala Dinner Dance & Awards Ceremony - continued from page 1)

The ASILM Gala is expected to be held again under the high patronage of H.E. Giorgio Napolitano, President of the Italian Republic. This would be the third time that President Napolitano grants this rare honor.

One of the many special features included in the upcoming Gala program is the wine auction. Wines to be auctioned are all of the 1985 vintage, and produced in the most renowned wineries of Italy. Each of these rare and high-value bottles represents Italian excellence at its finest.

The exhibition and live wine auction will be in a central area of the Grand Ballroom to allow easy visibility. All of the guests can participate in the auction and take home one or more of these superb wines, which are not available in retail stores.

Proceeds from the auction are used solely to further the Society and its ASILM Education Fund.

For the first time, the Gala will offer an expanded wine menu. Members and guests will be able to choose from a wide selection of Italian wines and specify which glasses they would like for pairing wines with their meals. All of the wines listed on the menu will be donated by the premier Italian wineries that guests will be sure to recognize. Furthermore, the wine producers who donated these wines will also be present at the Gala, giving members the opportunity to meet these industry leaders while also sampling their fine wines.

Another highlight of the evening is the annual awards ceremony. During this ceremony, three prestigious awards will be presented: the Grand Award of Merit, the Grand Medal of Merit and the Gold Medal for Excellence in Wine.

The presentation of the Grand Award of Merit, the Society's highest honor, will once again be the climax of the awards ceremony. Every year the Grand Award of Merit is given in recognition to those who have dedicated themselves to improving the daily lives of the public with their contributions in diverse fields, including art, medicine, business, politics and jurisprudence. These distinguished personalities thus represent Italian excellence in every sense.

At last year's Gala ceremony, the Grand Award of Merit was presented to four exceptional leaders in their fields: Dr. Silvia Formenti, Chair of the Department of Radiation Oncology at NYU Langone Medical Center and a leader in breast cancer research; Cav. del Lavoro Giovanni Rana, founder of the Rana Group and one of the most prominent food producers in Italy; Hon. Patricia de Stacy Harrison, President and CEO of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting; and Mr. Francesco Cafiso, a gifted jazz musician who received the award on behalf of his predecessors: Sicilian jazz musicians who contributed to the development and diffusion of the musical style throughout the world.

Other past recipients of this award include: Hon. George W. Bush, former President of the United States; H.E. Giorgio Napolitano, President of the Italian Republic; Comm. Dr. Fabrizio Michelassi, Surgeon-in-Chief at New York Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center; Cav. di Gran Croce, Hon. Arnaldo Pomodoro, the renowned Italian artist; Cav. di Gran Croce, Hon. Antonin Scalia, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States; and Gr. Uff. Hon. Ronald Spogli, former United States Ambassador to the Italian Republic.

To conclude the evening, Panorama Music will once again provide lively dance tunes varying from jazz standards to current top 40 hits.

Dress code is strictly black-tie with decorations.

To add a more meaningful, long-term impact to this upcoming event, the proceeds from the Gala (including the wine auction) are used solely to further the ASILM Education Fund.

Created by the Society, the ASILM Education Fund endows scholarships for undergraduate college students to pursue degrees in the Italian language. The scholarships are granted on the basis of achievement, character, motivation and financial need, and are subject to renewal throughout the student's undergraduate career.

All payments to the Gala are tax-deductible.

Formal Gala invitations will be mailed to ASILM members in December 2014. Some members have already made their reservations in advance, and space is very limited. Therefore, members are encouraged to R.S.V.P. at their earliest convenience. ■



(L. to R.): Cav. di Gran Croce, Dr. Lucio Caputo, Hon. Patricia de Stacy Harrison, Dr. Silvia Formenti, M.D., Cav. del Lavoro Giovanni Rana, Toastmaster Mrs. Laura Savini and Ms. Kimberly Fry (ASILM) during the awards ceremony of the 48th ASILM Gala, which was held on February 20, 2014.



(I CAVALIERI IN AMERICA - continued from page 1)

Society's trip to Rome where the first copy of *I Cavalieri in America* will be officially presented at a formal reception to the President of the Italian Republic (who is also the head of all Italian chivalric orders), leading Italian authorities, the press and other prominent officials. The book will then be made available to ASILM members.

Following the suggestions of Cav. Prof. Salvatore Rotella, plans for the initiative were announced to members of the Society last October.

Ultimately, *I Cavalieri in America* will pay homage to decorated personalities by highlighting their positive activities. It will also contribute to furthering relations between Italy and the U.S., and will make the "decorati" and their achievements better known. The book will be a reference point for those who belong to and are interested in this segment of the American population that is so intimately connected to Italy.

The long-lasting impact of *I Cavalieri in America* will be invaluable. For years to come, anyone who reads the book will learn and remember the "decorati," and how their roles have impacted and greatly benefitted society.

I Cavalieri in America, to be published in English for its first edition, will also include information on different chivalric orders and messages from important authorities.



Cav. Prof. Salvatore Rotella, who first suggested I Cavalieri in America, welcomes the honor of writing the introduction to the book.

For this special project, one page in color will be dedicated to each member who received his or her decoration from the Italian Republic and lives in the United States or Canada. ■

PARTICIPATE IN *I CAVALIERI IN AMERICA*

To be included in *I Cavalieri in America*, "decorati" must provide a brief biography in English, either typed or handprinted (no cursive), summarizing their lives and important activities. They must also submit a picture in color that was preferably taken in the period they received their decorations.

Many members of ASILM have expressed enthusiasm for this initiative, and have readily submitted their materials to be included in the book.

Members who have not yet submitted their materials should

do so as soon as possible in order for the book to be printed and published in time.

The full step-by-step instructions, sample page and required form are available on the Society's web-site: www.asilm.org.

The completed form, along with a brief bio and photo, can be mailed to: ASILM, P.O. Box 789, New York, NY 10150; or e-mailed to president.asilm@yahoo.com.



(VIP TRIP TO ITALY - continued from page 3)



The ASILM delegation will participate in many memorable events during its excursion to Rome, including the military parade celebrating the anniversary of the Italian Republic on June 2nd.

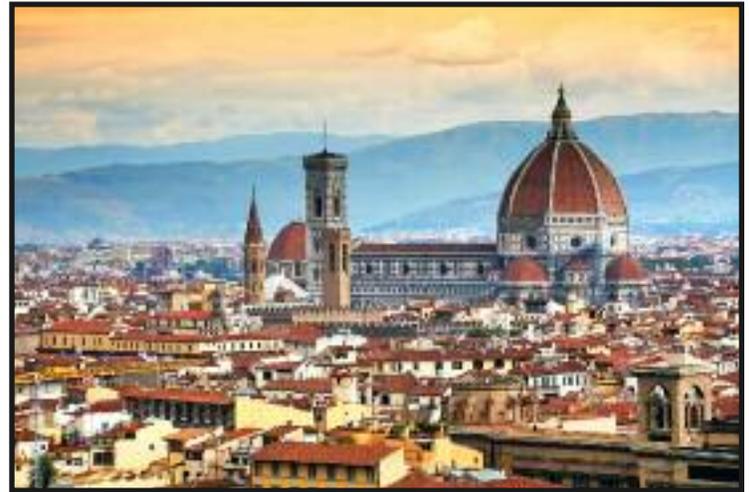
entation of *I Cavalieri in America* at the ASILM reception, which will be held in the ballroom of the Hotel Savoy. Local authorities, members of the diplomatic and consular corps, VIPs, television personalities, journalists and friends of the Society will attend this presentation and meet the key members behind the book.

The presentation by the delegation will promote the book and underline both the significance of ASILM to the highest Italian officials and the relevant role it continues to play in the U.S. and in Italy.

Another distinctive feature of the program is the parade celebrating the anniversary of the Italian Republic. To mark this important day in Italy's history, thousands of Italians each year come to watch the annual military parade on Via dei Fori Imperiali, the main road that connects the Coliseum to Piazza Venezia. ASILM members will attend the event, as guests, and thus become actively involved in the festivities.

While in Rome, members will also be able to explore the rich cultural surroundings. They will visit Castelli Romani for a full-day excursion and dine at the finest restaurants, including Il Caminetto, Aroma, Il Bolognese, and La Pergola. Plenty of free time has been added to the program to allow members to explore the city's many tourist attractions.

The Part I program of this trip follows the success of the November 2011 visit to Rome when the delegation had a rare audience with President Giorgio Napolitano at the Palazzo del Quirinale. The delegation also met with Hon. Gianfranco Fini, President of the Chamber of Deputies, at Palazzo Montecitorio; Hon. Renato Schifani, President of the Senate, at the Palazzo Giustiniani; and Hon. David Thorne, U.S. Ambassador to Italy, at the Italian Embassy. Similar meetings will be scheduled for this forthcoming trip.



Florence is one of several cities that the ASILM delegation will visit in Part II of the VIP trip to Italy next June.

For Part II of the trip, members will tour some of the best cities and regions in Italy: Florence, Liguria, Turin and Milan.

The Part II program of the trip, which is optional, offers intriguing cultural activities and excursions to multiple famous cities. Members will spend an afternoon in Florence, visit Santa Margherita Ligure, and stay overnight in Portofino. They will have two full days to explore the unique city of Turin, where they will visit the city's famous Egyptian Museum, the Venaria Reale, the Shroud of Turin, and Turin's many other fascinating sites.

Members will then spend their last full day of the program in Milan to visit EXPO 2015, whose theme is "Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life." With over 20 million expected visitors over its six-month period, Expo 2015 is expected to be a very successful show. Members will have a full day to see the diverse pavilions from all over the world, including the U.S. installation.

The cost to participate in Part II has been limited to around \$2,500 per person (double occupancy).

Participants can participate in one or both parts of the trip.

Details included in the above program are tentative, and will be finalized in the coming weeks. Members are encouraged to block the dates for the trip and contact the Society (president.asilm@yahoo.com) if they have any questions.

Proceeds from the trip are used solely to further the ASILM Education Fund. ■



VIP TRIP TO ITALY PROGRAM ~ PART I May 30 - June 5, 2015

Saturday, May 30

Arrive in Rome. Check in at Hotel Savoy

Free afternoon and evening to relax in Rome

Sunday, May 31

9:00 am: Full breakfast in hotel

10:00 am: Transfer by private coach to Castelli Romani

1:00 pm: Lunch at La Vecchia Frasca Restaurant

4:00 pm: Return to hotel by private coach

7:30 pm: Reception and welcome dinner on the Hotel Savoy terrace overlooking the skyline of Rome

Monday, June 1

9:00 am: Full breakfast in hotel

11:00 am: Palazzo Giustiniani - (Tentative) Meeting of the Delegation with the President of the Senate**

1:00 pm: Lunch at Il Caminetto Restaurant

6:00 pm - 9:00 pm: ASILM Reception in the ballroom of Hotel Savoy in honor of the Italian officials, VIPs, members of the diplomatic corps, television personalities, press and friends of the Society

Tuesday, June 2

8:00 am: Full breakfast in hotel

9:00 am: Attend, as special guests, the military parade on the "Fori Imperiali" for the anniversary of the Italian Republic

1:00 pm: Lunch at Aroma Restaurant

7:00 pm: Participate in the reception for the "Festa della Repubblica"***

11:00 pm: Return to hotel

Wednesday, June 3

9:00 am: Full breakfast in hotel

10:00 am: Palazzo Montecitorio - (Tentative) meeting of the Delegation with the President of the Chamber of Deputies**

5:00 pm: Depart from Hotel Savoy for the Palazzo del Quirinale

6:00 - 7:00 pm: Palazzo del Quirinale - (Tentative) meeting of the Delegation with the President of the Republic**

8:00 pm: Dinner at Il Bolognese Restaurant in Piazza del Popolo

11:00 pm: Return to hotel

Saturday, June 4

9:00 am: Full breakfast in hotel

11:00 am: American Embassy - (Tentative) meeting with the U.S. Ambassador to Italy

3:00 pm: Piazza del Campidoglio - (Tentative) Meeting of the Delegation with the Mayor of Rome, and viewing of the "Fori Imperiali" from the famous window in the Mayor's office**

8:00 pm: Farewell dinner at La Pergola Restaurant on Monte Mario

11:00 pm: Return to hotel

Friday, June 5

8:00 am: Full breakfast in hotel

End of Part I Program in Rome

6 NIGHTS TOTAL

*TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

****ALL OFFICIAL MEETINGS AND THEIR DATES AND TIMES ARE SUBJECT TO CONFIRMATION**



VIP TRIP TO ITALY PROGRAM ~ PART II

June 5 - June 10, 2015

Friday, June 5

9:00 am: Depart Rome by private coach for Florence

12:00 pm: Arrive in Florence

12:00 - 4:00 pm: Lunch at Enoteca Pinchiorri and visit to the center of the city

4:30 pm: Depart Florence by private coach for the Italian Riviera

7:00 pm: Arrive in Santa Margherita Ligure and check into the Imperiale Palace Hotel

8:00 pm: Dinner at Angolo 48 Restaurant

10:00 pm: Return to hotel

Saturday, June 6

8:00 am: Full breakfast in hotel

9:00 am: Depart by private coach for Portofino

9:30 am - 4:00 pm: Visit and relax in Portofino

12:00 pm: Lunch at Il Pitosforo Restaurant

4:30 pm: Depart for Turin

7:00 pm: Arrive in Turin. Check in at Grand Hotel Sitea

8:00 pm: Dinner at Grande Carte Restaurant in Grand Hotel Sitea

Sunday, June 7

9:00 am: Full breakfast in hotel

10:00 am - 6:30 pm: Visit by private coach the Egyptian Museum, the Venaria Reale, the Valentino Park and the Shroud of Turin

1:00 pm: Lunch at the Dolce Still Novo alla Reggia Restaurant

6:30 pm: Return to hotel

8:00 pm: Dinner at La Smarrita Restaurant

10:00 pm: Return to hotel

Monday, June 8

8:30 am: Full breakfast in hotel

9:30 am: Welcome and medal ceremony with the Mayor of Turin**

11:00 am - 4:00 pm: Walking tour of the city (Santuario Basilica La Consolata, Mole Antonelliana, National Cinema Museum, San Lorenzo, Piazza Castello and Palazzo Madama)

1:00 pm: Lunch at La Barrique Ristorante

8:00 pm: Dinner at Del Cambio Restaurant in Turin

11:00 pm: Return to hotel

Tuesday, June 9

8:00 am: Full breakfast in hotel

9:00 am: Depart Turin by private coach for Milan

11:00 am: Arrive in Milan. Check in at the Sheraton Milan Malpensa Hotel

12:00 pm - 10:00 pm: Visit EXPO 2015

8:00 pm: Farewell dinner at EXPO 2015

11:00 pm: Return to hotel

Wednesday, June 10

9:00 am: Full breakfast in hotel

12:00 pm: Check out of hotel. End of the trip

5 NIGHTS TOTAL

***TENTATIVE SCHEDULE - TO BE CONFIRMED**

****ALL OFFICIAL MEETINGS AND THEIR DATES AND TIMES ARE SUBJECT TO CONFIRMATION**



ASILM PARTICIPATES IN THE 11TH ANNUAL CONGRESS OF THE NJIIAHC

The New Jersey Italian and Italian American Heritage Commission (NJIIAHC) presented its 11th annual statewide Congress in the Mercer County Community College Conference Center in West Windsor, NJ, on Saturday, November 8th. The theme for this year's Congress was "Achievements of National Italian American Organizations."

The president of ASILM, Lucio Caputo, was invited to be a panelist at the 2014 Congress to represent and discuss the Society.

At the event, Dr. Caputo outlined the mission of the Society, and discussed the organization's current projects, such as its annual Gala Dinner Dance & Awards Ceremony, its forthcoming trip to Rome to meet with Italian officials and attend the military parade, and *I Cavalieri in America*.

Dr. Caputo then emphasized the changes in the roles and presence of Italian and Italo-American in the U.S., the exceptional progress made to improve the image of Italo-Americans and their great contributions to American society. "We should be proud of our descent," said Dr. Caputo, "proud of our culture, proud of our language, and

proud of all the things that Italy has donated to the world. We are not going anymore from the back door, but are now leading the way through the front door." His remarks were met with strong applause from all of the guests in attendance.

The other roundtable presenters were: Uff. Joseph Sciame, President of The Conference of Presidents of Major Italian American Organizations and President of the Italian Heritage & Culture Committee of New York, Inc.; Ms. Elisa Coccia, President of the Coccia Foundation; Mr. Richard D'Arminio, National President Elect of UNICO National; Ms. Patricia Martone, Chair of the National Organization of Italian American Women; and Mr. Dominic Pucci, New Jersey Order of the Sons of Italy Association State President.

After all of the panelists' presentations, they moved on to a panel discussion on how they could collaborate with each other in the future.

The event was followed by a well-attended luncheon hosted by Cav. Gilda Rorro Baldassari, Ed.D., Honorary Vice Consul for Italy in Trenton, NJ. ■



(L. to R.): Mr. Fred Proulx (Executive Director of NJIIAHC), Dr. Lucio Caputo, and Uff. Thomas Bellavia, M.D., at the 11th Annual Congress of NJIIAHC.



(L. to R.): Uff. Joseph Sciame, Cav. Mary Ann Re, Ph.D., Comm. Eileen Poiani, Ph.D., and Dr. Lucio Caputo pose together at the event.

(ASILM Education Fund - continued from page 3)

Donors, unless otherwise requested, will be given proper recognition.

When a substantial amount is reached, a committee composed of qualified members of the academic world will be set up and will contact universities in the United States to discuss conditions for the assignment of scholarships.

Universities that offer the best opportunities for applicants will be assigned the scholarships or, upon extensive review, the

committee will select the university with the best proposal.

Any member with a scholarly background who wishes to join this separate committee to contact various universities should contact ASILM at president.asilm@yahoo.com.

Members of the committee will perform tasks without any direct or indirect compensation. ■



MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

CAV. JOSEPH M. MATTONE, SR., RECEIVES “HONORARY CITIZENSHIP AWARD” FROM THE MAYOR OF SALENTO

Joseph Mattone, Sr., president and CEO of the Queens-based Mattone Group and member of ASILM and of the St. John’s University Board of Trustees, was asked to make a trip along with his wife Mary Ann to his native Italy to attend a peace conference organized by St. John’s University.

The trip to Italy, which took place in June 2014, included two memorable events, the first a peace conference they attended with a group from the university. During their visit, they had an opportunity to meet with Pope Francis during a small audience that the group attended.

The second event took place when the Mattones traveled to Salerno, where they visited the town of Salento. On June 25th, a surprise ceremony was arranged to grant Mr. Mattone an honorary citizenship award by the mayor, Gabriele DeMarco. Cav. Mattone received this unique honor in recognition of his years of philanthropy to the Italian community.

Cav. Mattone is the first Italian American to ever receive the accolade of “honorary citizen.”

The award ceremony was followed by a reception in the town’s City Hall. ■



Mayor of Salento Gabriele De Marco presenting an award to Cav. Joseph M. Mattone, Sr., as Mrs. Mary Ann Mattone, Mr. Loreto d’Aiuto and Ms. Katherine Elisabeth Byers look on.

CAV. PETER CARUSO RECEIVES TITLE OF GRANDE UFFICIALE

At a recent event in Totowa, NJ, staged in honor of Sister Myriam Castelli, the host of the religious television program “Christianita’: Ieri, Oggi, Domani,” a surprise ceremony was conducted to honor Cav. Peter Caruso.

The Deputy Consul General of Italy in New York, Dr. Roberto Frangione, bestowed on Cav. Caruso the decoration of Grande Ufficiale Ordine al Merito della Repubblica Italiana under a decree of the

President of the Italian Republic, H.E. Giorgio Napolitano.

The new Grande Ufficiale, who was surprised and overwhelmed by the honor, expressed his gratitude to Deputy Consul Frangione and to President Napolitano, and was roundly applauded by those attending the event. ■



(L. to R.): Cav. Giulio Piccoli, Sister Myriam Castelli, Cav. Peter Caruso, and Dr. Roberto Frangione at a surprise decoration ceremony in honor of Cav. Caruso.



DID YOU KNOW? HOLIDAY EDITION

BOLZANO CHRISTMAS MARKET

There are few places like the town of Bolzano during the holiday season. Located within the province of Alto Adige in South Tyrol, Bolzano is unique in its rich history, culture and popular events, especially its well-known Christmas Market that takes place annually from the end of November until January 6th.

Organized for the first time in 1991, Bolzano's Christmas Market has been attracting thousands of visitors every year, and is one of the biggest Christmas markets in Italy, with 80 exhibitors, 3 gastronomy stations and a small market for children set up in the town's Piazza Walther, the historic salon of the ancient medieval district.

Within their charming huts that resemble small mountain shelters, the vendors offer an impressive variety of seasonal gifts, including unique decorations and hand-crafted items made of wood, ceramic and glass. The market is also filled with authentic regional food, strudel, apple fritters, spices, seasonal pastries and cauldrons of mulled wine.

While shopping in the piazza, visitors to the market are immersed in a warm light; lamps and candles throughout the streets and piazzas alight the town in a warm and wintry glow, giving a gen-



The Bolzano Christmas Market in Alto Adige is one of the biggest and most enchanting Christmas markets in Italy.

uine holiday ambience that is truly unique. Horse-drawn carriages, puppet shows and Nativity scenes further add to this Alpine Christmas atmosphere. ■

PANETTONE: THE TRADITIONAL ITALIAN CHRISTMAS TREAT

Panettone is a sweet bread loaf that originated in Milan. This cupola-shaped dessert is both a symbol of the city and a Christmas dinner staple. Panettone is extremely popular all over Italy, as well as in southeastern France, Spain, Portugal, Brazil, Malta, Germany, Switzerland, several countries in South America, and more recently the United Kingdom.

The bread contains candied orange, citron, lemon zest and dry raisins. Many Italians choose to pair the dessert with coffee, liqueur or sweet wine.

In the 1920s, Angelo Motta revolutionized the panettone by enriching it with fats and using straw paper to create the taller, mushroom-shaped dessert that became the classical shape.

There are many legends surrounding the origins of panettone. One such legend takes place in the Medieval era when a wealthy falconer, Ugheto Atellani, fell in love with a poor baker's daughter, Adalgisa. To help revitalize the failing business of Adalgisa's father, Ugheto dressed up as a peasant and offered to work with the baker. After selling his falcons, Ugheto purchased fine flour, eggs, dried grapes and candied fruits to completely transform the baker's corn cakes into something much more special. The sweet



Panettone is one of the most popular desserts in Italy. The sweet bread is a symbol of Milan and the Christmas holiday season.

bread became an instant success and the bakery was saved. Ugheto finally removed his disguise and asked to marry Adalgisa, to which the baker happily agreed. ■

IL CAVALIERE



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