



May • June
2021



Italia

NEWSLETTER of the ITALIAN WORKMEN'S CLUB

914 Regent Street • Madison, Wisconsin 53715

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President's Message



Oh, for the simple life.

Memorial Day weekend is considered the unofficial start of summer. As

a kid, I remember thinking I only have a few days of school left before I can enjoy baseball, playing outside until it was too dark to see, festivals and car trips with my family. Life was simple.

Over the years, life has gotten more complicated. Baseball is still a harbinger of summer, but there are many more teams now, the players make a lot more money and time is wasted watching endless instant replay reviews. The innocent laughter of children can still be heard outdoors, but all too frequently young people spend their time indoors with cell phones, gaming systems and other electronic devices. Community festivals are beginning to slowly make a comeback, but what responsible parent would hand their child a

\$20 bill and confidently send them unaccompanied into a crowd of strangers and carnies. No offense to McDonalds, Culvers, or Taco Bell, but nothing they offer can beat the sensory overload of my dad firing up the Coleman Stove and making pancakes and bacon at a roadside stop. If nothing else, the past fifteen months should have taught us to value the simple things. As restrictions loosen, we should remember that lesson and cherish the simple beauty of human interactions.

Festa Italia

Our mission statement encourages us to “engage with the surrounding community.” No event accomplishes that better than Festa Italia, our annual cultural picnic and music festival. As one of the most popular ethnic festivals in Dane County, we welcome over 5,000 guests to McKee Farms Park in Fitchburg during the weekend following the Memorial Day holiday. Last year we

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The boys give Zehra a real education.

were forced to cancel Festa. A fate we shared with every other large indoor, or outdoor gathering.

In the Fall of 2020, we established a committee to consider options for making Festa Italia 2021 happen. They looked at three, two and one day Festas, mini Festas, virtual Festas, drive through Festas, mobile Festas and numerous other variations. Early in 2021, a decision was made to focus on conducting a traditional three day event at a new date (7/30-8/1) to allow more time for COVID-19 cases to ease and restrictions to loosen.

Throughout this entire process we maintained a close connection with Public Health Madison & Dane County (PHMDC) and even reached out to Dane County Executive (and fellow member) Joe Parisi, who put

us in touch with someone who gave us periodic updates related to guidance for large outdoor festivals.

After careful consideration the committee recommended and the Council approved cancelling Festa once again. The disappointment in having to once again cancel our signature event is palpable. This decision was more difficult than last year's because most of the trendlines (cases, hospitalizations, infection rates, deaths, vaccination numbers, etc.) are moving in the right direction. Life is beginning to return to some sense of normalcy.

However, multiple factors such as; the uneasiness expressed by many people about attending large gatherings, the guidance to keep six feet physical distancing, a lack of confidence in having the required number of member volunteers, the likely absence of work release labor, concern about reduced food offerings and fewer sponsorship dollars led us to conclude that in the best interests of our Club and the community we should cancel Festa this year and begin planning early for a return to our usual late May/early June weekend in 2022.

I want to thank the members of the planning committee for their dedica-

tion to focus on making a good sound decision in the best interests of our club and the community, and not a decision that sounds good. I also want to thank the members of our Council for their respectful debate and thoughtful deliberation of all pertinent issues.

Cleaning & Reopening Our Clubhouse

It started with Jack Parrino's return in March from his annual vacation with Cheryl to warmer climates. He immediately took charge and organized a group of members including Butch Pullara, Steve Urso, Mike Stassi, Dan Dyer and Bob Lavigna to give our historic clubhouse a thorough cleaning and sanitizing; from ceiling fan blades and light switches to refrigerators

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Italia

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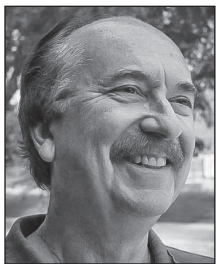
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If Clothes Make the Man



By Tom Smith

There have always been national stereotypes regardless of whether there is any truth to them.

The Brits have funny teeth, the French have berets and baguettes, and the Dutch wear short-sleeved shirts and pulled up white socks. One such stereotype often associated with Italians is that they dress well.

It is an old proverb that clothes make the man...meaning people are judged according to the way that they dress. In the beginning, clothing served primarily two functions: (1) to protect the wearer from the elements; and (2) as a symbol of rank and fortune. Commoners wore whatever they could acquire, royalty and the upper class would wear clothing made from the finest materials, crafted by the most skilled craftsmen. One could discern a man's status or rank by what they wore, just as today we can tell someone is a priest by their collar, a judge by their robes, or a construction worker by their safety vest and hardhat.

While you may not find members "dressed to kill" at a monthly membership meeting, most Italian men I know are no strangers to fashion when the moment calls for it... whether casual attire, a wedding, or a night on the town. And throughout history, as in many other areas, people should know that Italy played an important role in fashion.

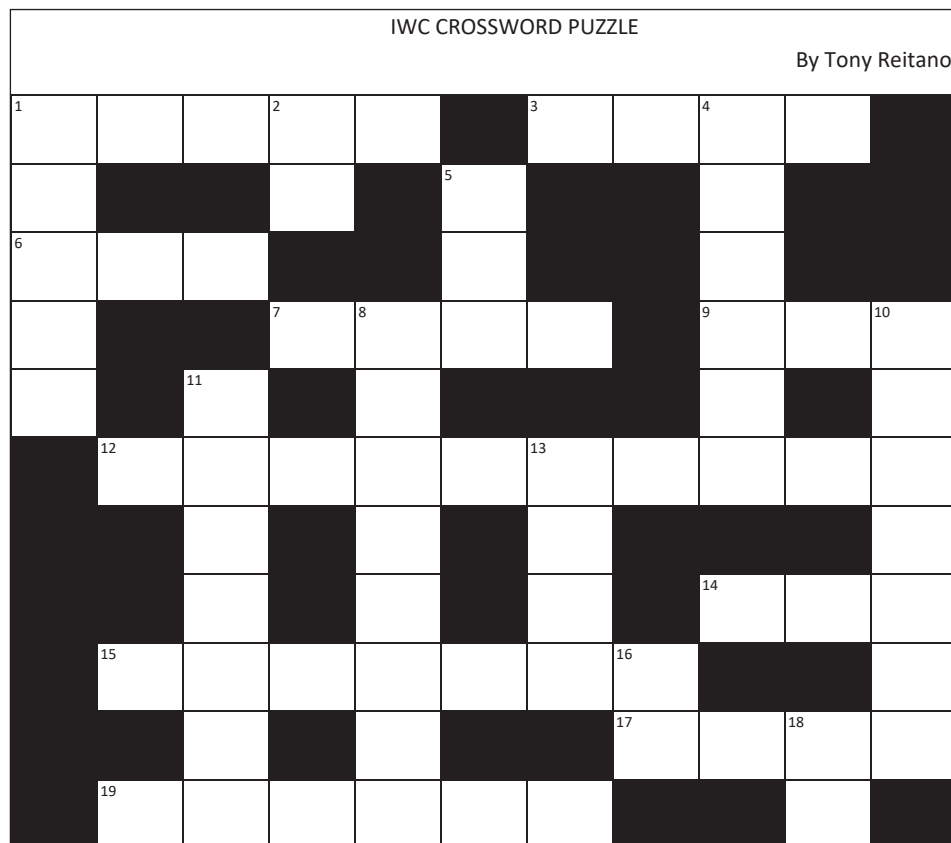


From the Middle Ages to the present, Italian fashion has been popular internationally, with cities in Italy producing textiles like wool, silk and

velvet. In Florence, birthplace of the Renaissance in Europe, fashion for men and women was extravagant and expensive. But the fashion industry declined during the industrialization of Italy until modern fashion brands were founded in the late 19th and 20th centuries. In the 1950s and 60s Italian fashion regained worldwide popularity.

In the early years, the 14th and 15th centuries, Italian fashion resembled that of England, Germany and

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IWC CROSSWORD PUZZLE

By Tony Reitano

Across:

- 1 Indigestion
- 3 Tomato sauce (NOT the sutff from a jar!)
- 6 Gioielleria metal
- 7 _____ - turismo
- 9 Italian mountain
- 12 Club _____ Italiani
- 14 Mama _____!
- 15 Home of Fontana dell'Elefante
- 17 Mouse who said, "Eddie, kiss me goodnight"

Down:

- 1 The moon hits your eye, that's _____
- 2 Caffe alternative
- 4 Pistacchio is a popular flavor
- 5 Greenbush _____
- 8 How to get the news in Italian
- 10 Countryman
- 11 Served with peppers at Festa
- 13 Spumante producer
- 16 50's dance song '____ The Hop'

France. However, Italian fashion became more distinctive because of its lavish nature and use of expensive materials. Men wore short “over dresses” – close-fitting



from the shoulders down or widened from the shoulders all the way down. Mainly made from fur trimming, they showed great creativity as they varied from person to person in both shape and finish.

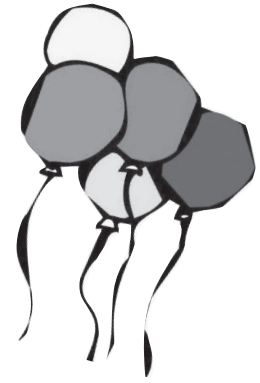
By the 15th century, men started to wear long, wide over coats. These coats came in many different shapes and varieties, with some reaching down to the feet and others just half way down the ankle. Coats were never tight. There was no prescribed style for sleeves and people experimented with them. A high neck was popular with many, but low necks were also common with most cut in a deep V-shape front and back.



During the Renaissance men wore a giornea, a large fitted waistcoat with wide puffy sleeves. They also wore an overcoat called a cioppa. Hats consisted of caps or berets (which became popular in the first half of the 16th century). The Renaissance was responsible for changing attitudes towards clothing. Men wanted to wear more fitted clothes that emphasized their body shape. Mirrors appeared in architecture, with their widespread use signaling an increased interest in fashion and self-image.

In the 17th century Italian fashion fell into a decline, though the industry remained active in Italy, especially in Rome, Milan and Florence. In the mid-19th century the production of silk in Italy was damaged by a ruinous and incurable silkworm disease (phylloxera -- an insect that also infested grape vines) and silk had to be imported from Asia. Even before World War II, Italy had gained an international reputation for the highest quality in men’s clothing and accessories.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, modern fashion designers like Ferragamo, Bulgari and Gucci were founded. And by the 1950s, tailoring firms like Brioni created the “Continental Look” in menswear. Their luxurious, body-conscious suits offered a distinct alternative to what had been the dominant “Ivy League Look” of American menswear and the traditional styles



IWC Birthdays

May

Enzo Ciarletta	(1)
Eric Holmes	(5)
William Battista	(7)
Anthony Gatti	(10)
Ron Giordan	(16)
James Pullara	(19)
Jay Moretti	(20)
Jim LeTourneau	(21)
Gordy Dybdahl	(23)
Ron Gatti	(23)
Anthony D. Fiore	(26)
John J. Colletti	(27)
George Colletti	(28)

June

John Baker	(3)
Todd Cambio	(4)
Joseph Shubat	(5)
Anthony Balistreri	(6)
Gary Berger	(8)
Frederick Underhill	(11)
Dick Murray	(12)

IAWC Birthdays

Betty Dybdahl	May 10
Mary Schiro	June 9
Jean Musillami	June 21
Katie LeTourneau	June 23



offered by London's Savile Row. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s Italian fashion regained popularity worldwide. Italy's presence in the American market fostered expansion of the Italian fashion industry. From 1950 to 1956 exports grew by more than 150 percent and in 1957 Italy was the main European exporter to the United States and Canada. Textile products were one of the largest retail sales groups in Italy, second only to food, with 175,000 shops specializing in everything from shoes and clothes to socks, knitwear, jewelers and furriers.

Fabric production centers allowed fashion designers to have access to high-quality fabrics. Three major centers for the production of wool – in Veneto, Piedmont and Tuscany – started the wool industry in Italy, with some of the most recognized manufacturers forming the first wool association.

In the 1970s Armani revolutionized men's clothing by creating unstructured jackets that were as comfortable as sweaters, but radiated an air of seductive elegance. His



clothes were worn by many of the famous as well as Hollywood stars. They were featured in the 1980 film *American Gigolo*, starring Richard Gere, who plays the role of a Los Angeles male escort who caters mostly to older female clientele and is accused of a murder which he did not commit.

The "Italian Look" is characterized as casual but with aristocratic elegance. "Made in Italy" is synonymous with quality, design and craftsmanship. Today one can dress in the finest Italian accessories from head to toe. Cotton and linen jackets, seldom a part of British tailoring, are a major part of Italian style.



The Valesca handcrafted shoe is a story about craftsmanship and innovation. From humble beginnings in the small city of Montegranaro they have grown to a worldwide luxury brand of footwear...from Italian artisans straight to your feet, but you won't find them at Payless shoes.



Though Rome has no shortage of quality hatmakers, only one stands out as the best, Borsalino. A family business now over 160 years old, its patented felt fedora was worn by Humphrey Bogart in *Casablanca* and Harrison Ford as *Indiana Jones*.

Italian peasants wore practical clothing for their daily life, simple pants and shirts. Today's Italian can be found wearing anything from a Performance Suit from Marzotto, made of the finest Italian wool, to cotton and linen shirts with jeans or cargo pants. In the end, Italian style comes from sprezzatura...a certain nonchalance that says whatever you do is done without effort, a natural look that you carry off.

At the Club, things are casual and far from a fashion show, though when members so choose you might see a hint of sprezzatura in a choice of a shirt, or a hat. But with the rich history of fashion for men in Italy, in a different place, you might just be surprised! And as part of our culture and history, we should know where that comes from. 🇮🇹





and tables and chairs and everything in between. It was all capped off by hiring Cleen Trax Maintenance, Inc. out of Verona to strip and wax the floor and stairway landings. This was made possible by a generous donation from fellow member Michael Kronz, who simply said he wanted to, “give something back to the club.”

The inside of the old brownstone at 914 Regent Street hasn’t looked this good in years. Enjoy the attached pictures. Hopefully, we’ll all get together soon for food, fun and camaraderie at membership meeting meals and social activities. We’re planning for the June 15th membership meeting to be held at the clubhouse. Watch your e-mail, or mailbox for further details.

Meals For Members

On Tuesday, April 20th, the IWC clubhouse kitchen was alive with activity for the first time in over a year. The pasta was boiling, the meatballs and sauce were heating, the salad was being mixed and the bread cut. Generous portions of home made Italian food were being provided for pick up, or delivery to members. The **Meals For**

Members concept was the brainchild of Steve Urso, with culinary assistance from Todd Cambio and Travis Hunter and support from Matt Rossetto, Dr. Dan Malone, Bill Battista, Ross DePaola, Butch Pullara, Tim Gatti, Joe Tripalin and Bob Lavigna. Their persistent efforts to create some semblance of normalcy resulted in serving over sixty meals, and the additional incentive to receive a bottle of clubhouse red wine for a \$10.00 donation sent twenty bottles from the clubhouse refrigerator to dining room tables across Dane County.

Social Activities Committee

Frank Alfano and Fred Underhill have continued to meet and plan social activities for the second half of 2021. Tentative dates and locations have been chosen for a Club Picnic (8/1 at McKee Farms Park) and for a Charity Golf Outing (9/19 at Lake Windsor Country Club). More details will follow in separate communications.

They’re also exploring dates and volunteers for; Sauce Tasting, Wine Making, Our Annual Awards Banquet and Christmas Parties.

IWC Scholarship Program

I’m very happy to announce that despite the disruptions we’ve all experienced over the past year, the IWC Scholarship Program will once again award \$5,000 worth of scholarships to three deserving high school graduates.

Joe Cabbibo and his team selected three recipients (Shae Pigarelli, Ellie Lombardo and Jack Salerno). Here’s a brief summary of their accomplishments.

Shae is graduating from Edgewood High School and will attend UW -La Crosse in the fall. She has earned an exceptional GPA, been admitted to the National Honor Society and has been involved in Math Team, the S.T.A.R. club, Bandana Project, The Crew for Stage productions and Fine Arts Week as a worker and assistant manager as well as tutoring underclassmen in Math and English. She has also taught Sunday

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School, been involved with 4-H for 13 years and served as club president, vice president, secretary, historian and as counselor at 4-H camp. She plans to major in Psychology.

Ellie is graduating from Mount Horeb High School and will also be attending UW La Crosse and plans to become a Physician Assistant. Ellie was inducted into the National Honor Society and received the Mount Horeb Vikings Award of Academic Success in all Coursework. She received a Mount Horeb Vikings Academic Letter as well as a Varsity Letter in Golf where she was also team captain Sophomore, Junior and Senior year and made All Conference First team.

Jack is graduating from Madison West High School. He too is a member of the National Honor Society, and was in the Concert Band, Symphony Band and the Honor Band as well as the all city Honor Band. He was a Board Member and Treasurer of the Madison West Student Support Foundation. He has volunteered for many camps and at the IWC Festa celebration. Jack plans to major in Secondary Education and become a High School Physics Teacher.

Italians In Madison – A UW Student’s Project

Back in March, a UW Journalism student (also minoring in Italian) named Zehra Topbas contacted me about doing her semester project on Italians who came to Madison. In one month, she did research, completed interviews and even paid a visit to the Shoe Shop (see picture of George and the boys with Zehra).

Instead of me trying to explain her high quality work, just click on this link, <https://italiansinmadison.com>

or enter it in your web browser. I’m sure you’ll agree that Zehra deserves an A+.

President’s Mail Box

Send me an e-mail (davidrizzo@me.com). If there’s something you like or don’t like about our club, or if you simply want to ask a question, or make a suggestion, I really want to hear from you. I can’t promise that I’ll address every need, or implement every idea, but I can promise you the courtesy of a response.

Alla prossima volta, statevi bene e Dio vi benedica..■



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Italia

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(608) 821-0886.

Meeting Dates

IWC Council Meetings – 2nd Tuesday of
Each Month 7:00 pm

IWC Membership Meetings – 3rd Tuesday
of Each Month 6:30 pm

Please clip and post this calendar.



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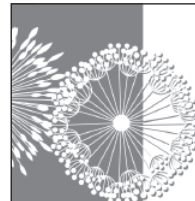
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