



NEWSLETTER

APRIL aprile 2024

MARCH MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Our speaker at our March Membership Meeting was Dennis R. Sutcliffe, a Cleveland Historian, who talked about alleged organized crime in Cleveland.



UPCOMING EVENTS

prossimi eventi

17 April 2024, Wednesday, Executive Committee Meeting

- Venue: Mama Roberto's Front Dining Room
- Time 5:30p
- The Nominating Committee shall continue assembling a slate of nominees for the positions of Officers and Trustees for FY25 and FY26.

24 April 2024, Wednesday, Membership Meeting

- Venue: The Buona Festa Social Club
- Time: 6:00p
- Speaker: Bob DiBiasio from the Cleveland Guardians.
- The Nominating Committee shall continue assembling a slate of nominees for Officers and Trustees for FY25 and FY26.

22 May 2024, Wednesday, Executive Committee Meeting

- Venue: Mama Roberto's Front Dining Room
- Time 5:30p
- The Nominating Committee shall finalize the slate of nominees for the positions of Officers and Trustees for FY25 and FY26.

29 May 2024, Wednesday, Membership Meeting

- Venue: The Buona Festa Social Club
- Time: 6:00p
- The Nominating Committee shall present the slate of nominees for the positions of Officers and Trustees for FY25 and FY26 to the membership. In addition, the

Nominating Committee shall take any nominations from the floor for those positions. After all floor nominations, if any, have been taken, the Nominating Committee shall officially close the slate of Nominees and advise the membership that the elections shall occur at the June Membership Meeting.

- Speaker: Nicloe Ward, mother of Denzel Ward from the Browns, to speak about CPR and AED awareness.

19 June 2024, Wednesday, Executive Committee Meeting

- Time 5:30p
- Venue: Mama Roberto's Front Dining Room

26 June 2024, Wednesday, Membership Meeting

- Venue: The Buona Festa Social Club
- Time: 6:00p
- Speaker: Tom Lombardo, St. Eds football coach.
- The Nominating Committee shall conduct the Election of Officers and Trustees for FY25 and FY26.

24 July 2024, Wednesday, Executive Committee Meeting

- Venue: Mama Roberto's Front Dining Room
- Time 5:30p

31 July 2024, Wednesday, Membership Meeting

- Venue: Either the Buona Festa Social Club or the Hungarian Culture Club
- Time: 6:00p
- Speaker: TBD⁴

3 AUGUST 2024, SATURDAY, AIH GOLF OUTING

- Committee Chair and primary Point of Contact: TBD
- Committee: TBD
- Venue: Black Brook Golf Club.
- Time: TBD
- Cost: TBD
- Capacity: TBD
- Guests: Spouses and Guests are welcome
- Caterers: TBD
- Reservations are required.

21 August 2024, Wednesday, Executive Committee Meeting

- Venue: Mama Roberto's Front Dining Room

28 August 2024, Wednesday, Membership Meeting

- Venue: Either the Buona Festa Social Club or the Hungarian Culture Club
- Time: 6:00p
- Speaker: TBD³

18 September 2024, Wednesday, Executive Committee Meeting

- Venue: Mama Roberto's Front Dining Room
- Time 5:30p

25 September 2024, Wednesday, Membership Meeting, CLUB BOCCE' TOURNAMENT

- Committee Chair and primary Point of Contact: Tony Iliano Sr. and Ron Wassum
- Venue: Hungarian Culture Club in Fairport Harbor
- Attendees: This is a member only event
- Time: 6:00p
- Reservations are required.

23 October 2024, Wednesday, Executive Committee Meeting

- Venue: Mama Roberto's Front Dining Room
- Time 5:30p

30 October 2024, Wednesday, Membership Meeting, AIH CLAM BAKE

- Committee Chair and primary Point of Contact: TBD
- Committee: TBD
- Venue: Regovich's Party Center
- Time: TBD
- Cost: TBD
- Capacity: TBD
- Guests: Spouses and Guests are welcome
- Reservations are required.

13 November 2024, Wednesday, Executive Committee Meeting

- Venue: Mama Roberto's Front Dining Room
- Time 5:30p

20 November 2024, Wednesday, Membership Meeting

- Venue: Either the Buona Festa Social Club or the Hungarian Culture Club
- Time: 6:00p
- Speaker: TBD¹

30 November 2024, Saturday, AIHC OSU v. MICHIGAN FOOTBALL GAME POOL

- Committee Chair and primary Point of Contact: John Perrotti
- Kick Off Time: **TBD**
- Venue: **TBD**
- The completed 50/50 Board will be posted on the club website prior to kick-off.
- Cost per Square: **TBD**

December 2024

In accordance with our Bylaws, there is no scheduled Executive Committee Meeting or Membership Meeting in December.

14 DECEMBER 2024, SATURDAY, AIH FAMILY CHRISTMAS PARTY

- Committee Chair and primary Point of Contact: Gus Paolucci
- Committee
 - John Perrotti
 - Jim Federico Sr.
 - Mario Bertone
- Venue: The Buona Festa Social Club
- Cost for attendees: **TBD**
- Hours: 2:00p to 4:00p, set up from 12:00p to 1:30p.
- Santa and Presents: Santa will pass out presents to children. All presents are to be purchased, wrapped, and delivered to the venue no later than 30 minutes prior to the start of the event.
- Registration is required. There is a limited capacity of 80, so it will be first come, first served.

19 FEBRUARY 2025, SUNDAY, AIHC SUPER BOWL LIX POOL

- Committee Chair and primary Point of Contact: John Perrotti
- Kick Off Time: 6:30p ET.
- Venue: Caesar’s Superdome in New Orleans, LA
- The completed 50/50 Board will be posted on the club website prior to kick-off.
- Cost per Square: **TBD**

26 APRIL 2025, SATURDAY, AIHC ITALIAN NIGHT

- Committee Chair and primary Point of Contact: Bob Andreano
- Committee: **TBD**
- Venue: **TBD**
- Time: **TBD**
- Cost: **TBD**
- Dinner: **TBD**
- Capacity: **TBD**
- Guest: **TBD**
 - Reservations are required.

SAVE THE DATES

Be sure to mark your calendars now for these events:

- 3 AUGUST 2024, SATURDAY, AIH GOLF OUTING**
- 30 OCTOBER 2024, WEDNESDAY, AIH CLAM BAKE**

14 DECEMBER 2024, SATURDAY, AIH FAMILY CHRISTMAS PARTY

30 NOVEMBER 2024, SATURDAY, AIHC OSU v. MICHIGAN FOOTBALL GAME POOL

19 FEBRUARY 2025, SUNDAY, AIHC SUPER BOWL LIX POOL

26 APRIL 2025, SATURDAY, AIHC ITALIAN NIGHT

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

Compleanni di aprile

Frank Stinziano	10
Andy Arena	15
Gus Paolucci	19
Stephen Gagliardi	20
Judge Cicconetti	24
Tony Iliano Sr.	25
Don Tichel	28

When you see these members this month, be sure to wish them a Buon Compleanno.

HEALTH AND WELFARE

salute e benessere

The committee reported the following:

- Member Mario Fioritto is recovering from a burst appendix and an emergency appendectomy.
- Trustee John Perrotti’s Uncle Charles Perrotti passed away on 11 Mar 24 at the age of 95.

Please keep these two and their families in your thoughts and prayers.

If you know of or hear of any Health or Welfare issues involving a member, please pass that information on to Richard O’Keefe at richardokeefe65@gmail.com or 440-537-8505.

SPECIAL DAYS IN APRIL

Here are just a few of the not so well-known special days in March for your observance.

- 05 Apr: Walk to Work Day
- 09 Apr: Be Kind to Lawyers Day
- 10 Apr: Siblings Day
- 12 Apr: Grilled Cheese Day
- 16 Apr: Eggs Benedict Day
- 22 Apr: Jellybean Day
- 26 Apr: Pretzel Day

The above information was taken from timeanddate.com/holidays/fun.

THINGS THAT HAPPENED IN PAST APRILS

3 April 1860 – The Pony Express officially opened. The route from St. Joseph, Missouri to Sacramento, California took about ten days, while the route from Sacramento to St. Joseph took about twelve days. The Pony Express ended its service in October 1861, after only eighteen months. The completion of the transcontinental telegraph on 24 October 1861 made the Pony Express unnecessary. The

Pony Express was never a financial success, its founders declared bankruptcy.

4 April 1949 – The United States and eleven other nations established the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

8 April 1074 – Henry “Hank” Aaron of the Atlanta Braves broke Babe Ruth’s all-time home run record, slamming his 715th dinger off Los Angeles Dodgers’ pitcher Al Downing. Aaron slammed 755 home runs in his career, a record that stood until 2007, when it was broken by Barry Bonds of the San Francisco Giants.



12 April 1633 – Galileo Galilei’s heresy trial began. His alleged crime was saying that the earth revolved around the sun instead of the current scientific consensus that the sun revolved around the earth. He was sentenced to life in prison and served that term at his home because of his poor health. He died in 1642.

The above information was taken from the 2024 “This Day in History” Page-A-Day Calendar.

APRIL FOOLS’ DAY IN ITALY: PESCE D’APRILE!

April Fools’ Day is known in Italy as *pesce d’aprile*. No matter the name every culture gives to this day, the purpose of it is common worldwide and a lot of countries celebrate it, including Italy.

Il pesce d’aprile, April Fools’ Day, is celebrated on April 1st, and it is a day during which Italians, too, have the custom of playing practical jokes on friends and relatives, following the ancient traditions of tricks played in far-off times.

Even if this custom is supposed to have its origins in the sixteenth century, it only really became popular in Italy around 1860-1880, especially in Genoa – which inaugurated this tradition – and was particularly practiced among the upper classes of society.

The explanation for the name *pesce d’aprile*, literally April’s fish, is often linked in Italy to the zodiac. In particular, the fact that every event on that day was connected to the Sun’s

exclusion from the Pisces constellation. From there comes the custom of celebrating the event in an unusual way, on April 1st.

Even if this tradition is not exclusive to Italy, April's Fool is celebrated in numerous countries, and the tricks played by Italians are certainly among the more colorful. Indeed, everybody, from children to adults, wants to have fun, including the media. Some memorable tricks have been played throughout the decades by playing radio, TV, and more recently, the internet, which would spread fake news, only to reveal the lie later during the day.

There are actually some jokes that have marked the history of this day in Italy. Here are some of them:

- The most ancient joke in Italy is that of the announcement made by Buoncompagno from Florence in the thirteenth century. He promised to fly over the town of Bologna with the machine he invented on April 1st. The whole population gathered to see the flight, which actually never took place as it was a trick.
- In March 1878, the *Gazzetta d'Italia*, an Italian newspaper, announced that people from Florence could have watched the cremation of an Indian *maharaja*, but they never saw it as some people came out of a bush shouting "*pesce d'aprile*" exactly when the coming of the hearse was expected.
- In 1967 a leaflet from URFA, an office in charge of rescuing abandoned cats, announced that starting from that moment cats were banned from the town. Some people also started to abandon their cats.
- In 2001 the newspaper *La Stampa* announced that some complex forms of biological life, huge worms, existed on Mars and that they had left their traces on our planet. On the same day, the newspaper *La Repubblica* announced a Finnish experiment on telepathy. According to a non-existent scientist, telepathy would soon become a human mental faculty.

Italians like having fun and playing tricks on this day in which everything is accepted. The longer it takes for the friend to figure out, the funnier the joke. Therefore, if you ever go to Italy on April 1st don't get surprised if you hear the famous motto of the day "*pesce d'aprile*" and a joke.

Written by Anna De Filippo on March 15, 2024

RMS TITANIC

14-15 April 1912

The RMS Titanic, a luxury steamship, sank in the early hours of April 15, 1912, off the coast of Newfoundland in the North Atlantic after

sidewiping an iceberg during its maiden voyage. Of the 2,240 passengers and crew on board, more than 1,500 lost their lives in the disaster. Titanic has inspired countless books, articles, and films (including the 1997 *Titanic* movie starring Kate Winslet and Leonardo DiCaprio), and the ship's story has entered the public consciousness as a cautionary tale about the perils of human hubris.

The Building of the RMS Titanic

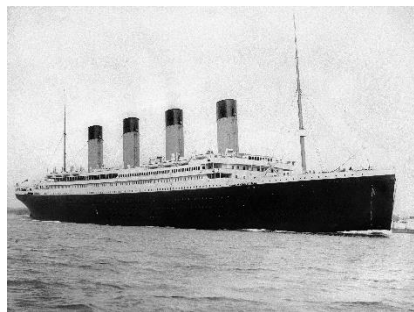
The Titanic was the product of intense competition among rival shipping lines in the first half of the 20th century. In particular, the White Star Line found itself in a battle for steamship primacy with Cunard, a venerable British firm with two standout ships that ranked among the most sophisticated and luxurious of their time.

Cunard's *Mauretania* began service in 1907 and quickly set a speed record for the fastest average speed during a transatlantic crossing (23.69 knots or 27.26 mph), a title that it held for 22 years.

Cunard's other masterpiece, *Lusitania*, launched the same year and was lauded for its spectacular interiors. *Lusitania* met its tragic end on May 7, 1915, when a torpedo fired by a German U-boat sunk the ship, killing nearly 1,200 of the 1,959 people on board and precipitating the United States' entry into World War I.

The same year that Cunard unveiled its two magnificent liners, J. Bruce Ismay, chief executive of White Star, discussed the construction of three large ships with William J. Pirrie, chairman of the shipbuilding company Harland and Wolff. Part of a new "Olympic" class of liners, each ship would measure 882 feet in length and 92.5 feet at their broadest point, making them the largest of their time.

In March 1909, work began in the massive Harland and Wolff shipyard in Belfast, Ireland, on the second of these three ocean liners, *Titanic*, and continued nonstop for two years.



On May 31, 1911, *Titanic*'s immense hull—the largest movable manmade object in the world at the time—made its way down the slipways and into the river Lagan River in Belfast. More than 100,000 people attended the launch,

which took just over a minute and went off without a hitch.

The hull was immediately towed to a mammoth fitting-out dock where thousands of workers would spend most of the next year building the ship's decks, constructing her lavish interiors, and installing the 29 giant boilers that would power her two main steam engines.

'Unsinkable' Titanic's Fatal Flaws

According to some hypotheses, *Titanic* was doomed from the start by a design that many lauded as state-of-the-art. The Olympic-class ships featured a double bottom and 15 watertight bulkhead compartments equipped with electric watertight doors that could be operated individually or simultaneously by a switch on the bridge.

It was these watertight bulkheads that inspired *Shipbuilder* magazine, in a special issue devoted to the Olympic liners, to deem them "practically unsinkable."

But the watertight compartment design contained a flaw that was a critical factor in *Titanic*'s sinking: While the individual bulkheads were indeed watertight, the walls separating the bulkheads extended only a few feet above the water line, so water could pour from one compartment into another, especially if the ship began to list or pitch forward.

The second critical safety lapse that contributed to the loss of so many lives was the inadequate number of lifeboats carried on *Titanic*. A mere 16 boats, plus four Engelhardt "collapsibles," could accommodate just 1,178 people. *Titanic* could carry up to 2,435 passengers, and a crew of approximately 900 brought her capacity to more than 3,300 people.

As a result, even if the lifeboats were loaded to full capacity during an emergency evacuation, there were available seats for only one-third of those on board. While unthinkable inadequate by today's standards, *Titanic*'s supply of lifeboats actually exceeded the British Board of Trade's requirements.

Passengers on the Titanic

Titanic created quite a stir when it departed for its maiden voyage from Southampton, England, on April 10, 1912. After stops in Cherbourg, France, and Queenstown (now known as Cobh), Ireland, the ship set sail for New York with 2,240 passengers and crew—or "souls," the expression then used in the shipping industry, usually in connection with a sinking—on board.

As befitting the first transatlantic crossing of the world's most celebrated ship, many of these souls were high-ranking officials, wealthy industrialists, dignitaries, and celebrities. First and foremost was the White Star Line's

managing director, J. Bruce Ismay, accompanied by Thomas Andrews, the ship's builder from Harland and Wolff.

The Unsinkable Molly Brown

Absent was financier J.P. Morgan, whose International Mercantile Marine shipping trust controlled the White Star Line and who had selected Ismay as a company officer. Morgan had planned to join his associates on Titanic but canceled at the last minute when some business matters delayed him.

The wealthiest passenger was John Jacob Astor IV, heir to the Astor family fortune, who had made waves a year earlier by marrying 18-year-old Madeleine Talmadge Force, a young woman 29 years his junior, shortly after divorcing his first wife.

Other notable passengers included the elderly owner of Macy's, Isidor Straus, and his wife Ida; industrialist Benjamin Guggenheim, accompanied by his mistress, valet and chauffeur; and widow and heiress Margaret "Molly" Brown, who would earn her nickname "The Unsinkable Molly Brown" by helping to maintain calm and order while the lifeboats were being loaded and boosting the spirits of her fellow survivors.

The employees attending to this collection of First-Class luminaries were mostly traveling Second Class, along with academics, tourists, journalists, and others who would enjoy a level of service and accommodations equivalent to First Class on most other ships.

But by far the largest group of passengers was in Third Class: more than 700, exceeding the other two levels combined. Some had paid less than \$20 to make the crossing. It was Third Class that was the major source of profit for shipping lines like White Star, and Titanic was designed to offer these passengers accommodations and amenities superior to those found in Third Class on any other ship of that era.

Titanic Sets Sail

Titanic's departure from Southampton on April 10 was not without some oddities. A small coal fire was discovered in one of her bunkers—an alarming but not uncommon occurrence on steamships of the day. Stokers hosed down the smoldering coal and shoveled it aside to reach the base of the blaze.

After assessing the situation, the captain and chief engineer concluded that it was unlikely it had caused any damage that could affect the hull structure, and the stokers were ordered to continue controlling the fire at sea.

According to a theory put forth by a small number of Titanic experts, the fire became uncontrollable after the ship left Southampton,

forcing the crew to attempt a full-speed crossing; moving at such a fast pace, they were unable to avoid the fatal collision with the iceberg.

Another unsettling event took place when the Titanic left the Southampton dock. As she got underway, she narrowly escaped a collision with the America Line's S.S. New York. Superstitious Titanic buffs sometimes point to this as the worst kind of omen for a ship departing on her maiden voyage.

The Titanic Strikes an Iceberg

On April 14, after four days of uneventful sailing, the Titanic received sporadic reports of ice from other ships, but she was sailing on calm seas under a moonless, clear sky.

At about 11:30 p.m., a lookout saw an iceberg coming out of a slight haze dead ahead, then rang the warning bell and telephoned the bridge. The engines were quickly reversed, and the ship was turned sharply—instead of making direct impact, the Titanic seemed to graze along the side of the berg, sprinkling ice fragments on the forward deck.

Sensing no collision, the lookouts were relieved. They had no idea that the iceberg had a jagged underwater spur, which slashed a 300-foot gash in the hull below the ship's waterline.

By the time the captain toured the damaged area with Harland and Wolff's Thomas Andrews, five compartments were already filling with seawater, and the bow of the doomed ship was alarmingly pitched downward, allowing seawater to pour from one bulkhead into the neighboring compartment.

Andrews did a quick calculation and estimated that Titanic might remain afloat for an hour and a half, perhaps slightly more. At that point the captain, who had already instructed his wireless operator to call for help, ordered the lifeboats to be loaded.

Titanic's Lifeboats

A little more than an hour after contact with the iceberg, a largely disorganized and haphazard evacuation began with the lowering of the first lifeboat. The craft was designed to hold 65 people; it left with only 28 aboard.

Tragically, this was to be the norm: During the confusion and chaos during the precious hours before the Titanic plunged into the sea, nearly every lifeboat would be launched woefully under-filled, some with only a handful of passengers.

In compliance with the law of the sea, women and children boarded the boats first; only when there were no women or children nearby were men permitted to board. Yet many of the victims were in fact women and children, the

result of disorderly procedures that failed to get them to the boats in the first place.

Exceeding Andrews' prediction, Titanic stubbornly stayed afloat for close to three hours. Those hours witnessed acts of craven cowardice and extraordinary bravery.

Hundreds of human dramas unfolded between the order to load the lifeboats and the ship's final plunge: Men saw off wives and children, families were separated in the confusion and selfless individuals gave up their spots to remain with loved ones or allow a more vulnerable passenger to escape. In the end, 706 people survived the sinking of the Titanic.

The ship's most illustrious passengers each responded to the circumstances with conduct that has become an integral part of the Titanic legend. Ismay, the White Star managing director, helped load some of the boats and later stepped onto a collapsible as it was being lowered. Although no women or children were in the vicinity when he abandoned ship, he would never live down the ignominy of surviving the disaster while so many others perished.

Thomas Andrews, Titanic's chief designer, was last seen in the First-Class smoking room, staring blankly at a painting of a ship on the wall. Astor deposited his wife Madeleine into a lifeboat and, remarking that she was pregnant, asked if he could accompany her; refused entry, he managed to kiss her goodbye just before the boat was lowered away.

Although offered a seat on account of his age, Isidor Straus refused any special consideration, and his wife Ida would not leave her husband behind. The couple retired to their cabin and perished together.

Benjamin Guggenheim and his valet returned to their rooms and changed into formal evening dress; emerging onto the deck, he famously declared, "We are dressed in our best and are prepared to go down like gentlemen."

Molly Brown helped load the boats and finally was forced into one of the last to leave. She implored its crewmen to turn back for survivors, but they refused, fearing they would be swamped by desperate people trying to escape the icy seas.

Titanic, nearly perpendicular and with many of her lights still aglow, finally dove beneath the ocean's surface at about 2:20 a.m. on April 15, 1912. Throughout the morning, Cunard's Carpathia, after receiving Titanic's distress call at midnight and steaming at full speed while dodging ice floes all night, rounded up all of the lifeboats. They contained only 706 survivors.

The above information was taken from [history.com/topics/early-20th-century-us/titanic](https://www.history.com/topics/early-20th-century-us/titanic)

ULYSSES S. GRANT DAY

27 April

Beginning in 2024, April 27th will be celebrated as Ulysses S. Grant Day in the iconic Civil War General's home state of Ohio, after legislation creating the recognition cleared the Legislature on December 14th, 2023, and was signed by Governor DeWine.

Grant, our 18th President, was born on that date in 1822, in Point Pleasant, Ohio, on the Ohio River, just upstream from Cincinnati.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ITALY

In many ways, the history of Italy is the history of the modern world. So many pivotal moments in our collective past have taken place in Italy that it can be considered Europe's historical keystone.

By 500 BC, a number of peoples of different ethnicity and origin shared Italy. Small Greek colonies dotted the southern coast and the island of Sicily. Gauls, ancestors of today's modern French, roamed the mountainous north. While the Etruscans, a group originally hailing from somewhere in western Turkey, settled in central Italy, establishing a number of city-states, including what is now modern-day Bologna. Little is known about the Etruscans except that they thrived for a time, creating a civilization that would pass down a fondness for bold architecture (stone arches, paved streets, aqueducts, sewers) to its successor, Rome.

According to legend, Rome was founded on April 21, 753 BC by Romulus and Remus, twin brothers who claimed to be sons of the war god Mars and to have been raised as infants by a she-wolf. Romulus saw himself as a descendant of the defeated army of Troy and wanted Rome to inherit the mantle of that ancient city, if not surpass it. When Remus laughed at the notion, Romulus killed his brother and declared himself the first king of Rome.



Rome went through seven kings until 509 BC when the last king was overthrown, and the Roman Republic was formed. Rome then came to be ruled by two elected officials (known as consuls), a Senate made up of

wealthy aristocrats (known as patricians), and a lower assembly that represented the common people (plebeians) and had limited power. This format of government worked well at first, but as Rome expanded beyond a mere city-state to take over territory not just in Italy, but overseas as well, the system of government came under severe strain.

By the First Century BC, Rome was in crisis. Spartacus, a slave, led the common people in a revolt against the rule of the aristocratic patricians. Rome was able to put down the rebellion, but at great cost, as the Republic dissolved into a series of military dictatorships that ended with the assassination of Julius Caesar.

In 29 BC, after a long power struggle, Julius Caesar's nephew, Octavius, seized power and declared himself Emperor Augustus. The Roman Empire was born. For the next two hundred years, Rome thrived, ruling over a vast territory stretching from Britain and the Atlantic coast of Europe in the north and west to North Africa and the Middle East in the south and east.

This *Pax Romana*, a time of peace, ended in 180 AD with the death of Marcus Aurelius. A combination of economic problems, barbarian invasions, domestic instability, and territorial rebellions, combined with a lack of strong leadership, resulted in the slow and gradual decline of Rome. In 380 AD, after three hundred years of persecution, Christianity became the one and only official religion. By the end of the Fourth Century AD, the Roman Empire split into two. The East, based out of the newly built capital of Constantinople, in what is now Turkey, thrived, eventually becoming the long-lasting Byzantine Empire. Rome, capital of the West, continued to decline.

In 410 AD, Rome itself was sacked by barbarian hordes. The Eastern Empire invaded but failed to restore order and had to withdraw. The Roman Empire in the West completely collapsed by the end of the 5th AD century. For the next thousand years, Italy once again became a patchwork of city-states, with Rome, home to the Catholic Church, being the most powerful. This long period of quiet stagnation was known as the Dark Ages.

Prosperity did not return to Italy again until the 14th Century, when city-states such as Florence, Milan, Pisa, Genoa, and Venice became centers of trade. The influx of wealth and increased trade contact with foreign lands, transformed Italy into Europe's premier center of culture. Funded by wealthy patrons, figures such as Leonardo Da Vinci, Michelangelo, Dante, Machiavelli, and Galileo, among others, revolutionized the fields of art, literature,

politics, and science. Italian explorers, such as Marco Polo and Christopher Columbus, introduced Italy and Europe to the rest of the world.

Italy remained a center of power until the 16th century, when trade routes shifted away from the Mediterranean and the Protestant Reformation resulted in the Catholic Church, which was based in Rome, losing influence over much of Northern Europe. Weakened, the various Italian city-states became vulnerable to conquest by Spain, France, and Austria. Italy remained a patchwork of principalities controlled through proxy by various European powers until the 19th century, when the French leader Napoleon supported the unification of Italy as a way of creating a buffer state against his many enemies. With the backing of France, Italian nationalist Giuseppe Garibaldi led a popular movement that took over much of Italy in 1861 and would be ending in 1870 with the fall of Rome and complete unification of the country.

Plagued by internal political divisions and with an economy devastated by war, the new Kingdom of Italy was no Roman Empire. In 1919, frustrated that Italy had received few gains despite having been a victor in the First World War, a politician named Benito Mussolini launched a movement that called for the restoration of Italy as a great power. In 1922, impatient with electoral politics, Mussolini led his supporters, known as Fascists, on a march on Rome to seize power directly through a coup. Spooked, the Italian king did not put up a fight and allowed Mussolini to become supreme ruler of Italy.

Mussolini spent the next twenty years consolidating power and building up the Italian economy, but he never gave up on the idea of restoring Italy as a great power. Calling himself "Il Duce" (meaning Leader), Mussolini dreamed of leading a new Roman Empire. In the 1930s, he indulged his dreams of conquest, by invading Ethiopia and Albania. When the Second World War broke out, Italy remained neutral at first. However, once it appeared through the fall of France that Germany would win, Mussolini eagerly joined Hitler, a fellow Fascist and longtime ally, in the war effort and rushed to invade Greece, the Balkans, and North Africa. Overextended and unprepared for such a large-scale effort, Italy quickly found that it could not maintain its military position and had to ask Germany for help. Before long, Mussolini saw himself losing control of North Africa, the Mediterranean, and eventually his very own country to the Allies. Fleeing Rome, Mussolini tried to set up a puppet state in Northern Italy but failed. Abandoned by a disgusted Hitler, Il Duce and his mistress were captured and executed by Italian partisans.

After the Second World War, Italy abolished the monarchy and declared itself a republic. With the strong support of the United States, Italy rebuilt its economy through loans from the Marshall Plan, joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and became a strong supporter of what is now the European Union. Today, Italy is one of the most prosperous and democratic nations in Europe.

The above information was taken from lifeinitaly.com/a-history-of-italy-in-brief/

CHALLENGES FACING ITALY'S ECONOMY IN 2024

*By Osama Rizvi, economist
Published on 22 Jan 24 - Updated 07 Feb 24*

With the ongoing national challenges such as slow GDP growth, an immigration crisis and a soft labor market, the global scenario remains bleak. For Italy, growth, albeit small, might still be on the cards, Osama Rizvi writes.

Italy's financial matters are likely to remain one of the country's most important issues this year, with its public finances still in a precarious condition. Italy needs more workers for various industries but a drive to increase workers from outside Italy is likely to be held back because of growing far-right influence.

In its latest forecast, the Bank of Italy estimates gross domestic product (GDP) will slow down further in 2024, down to 0.6% from 0.7% in 2023.

Inflation, something that impacts consumers directly and significantly, has toned down a little but is expected to increase once again to above the 2% threshold. Core inflation, which excludes energy and food, still stands at 3.1%, as per the figures released in December.

Measures put in place to curb the impact of rising energy prices — such as a 22% VAT rate on gas — are being lifted, thereby leading to another inflationary jump.

Investment, especially in the construction sector, declined sharply in 2023 and, according to GlobalData, there will be a further decline of 8.6% this year, in combination with falling employment, permits, and residential permits.

Analysts Fitch Solutions forecast a slowdown in consumer spending and investment compared to the previous two years. It expects GDP growth in 2024 to slow to 0.3%, below an estimate of 0.8%.

Another function of a slowing economy is it leads to a tightening of financial conditions. Fitch Solutions believes the European Central Bank (ECB) will keep its rate at 4% until October which might adversely affect business/manufacturing activity.

It is important to note that 75.1% of loans taken out in 2023 by households and businesses were what

is called a floating-rate loan, where the level of interest paid back on the loan is varied, not fixed.



Giorgia Meloni, the Prime Minister of the new Italian government, in Rome, October 2022AP

This means that, if interest rates rise, those with floating-rate loans will have to pay back more interest on their loans. An increased cost of borrowing for businesses and individuals means both groups are likely to have less money to spend elsewhere.

Another possible impact could be a softening of labor markets. The rating agency expects unemployment to reach 8.5% by the end of 2024 vs 7.6% in Q2 of 2023 in Italy.

Falling employment levels and slowing wage growth are expected to put further pressure on consumers and their spending. For instance, if we look at the mortgage rate in August 2023, it stood at 4.3%, up from a previous 3%. This inevitably harms consumers' disposable income.

With climate disasters becoming more prevalent in the country, the catastrophic floods of 2023 seemed to be becoming more common in some parts of Italy. If the trend remains in 2024, it seems that the climate inconsistency of Italy may lead to the country experiencing a series of extreme weather events that will prove hazardous for its socio-economic landscape.

Considering that the second year of El Nino is usually warmer than the first, 2024 may bring climatic challenges for Italy in the major sectors of health, energy, and food.

The year began with Italy taking over the presidency of G7 from Japan. This could turn out to be one of the main challenges for Rome as the transfer of power comes at a crucial time.

With the ongoing national challenges such as slow GDP growth, an immigration crisis and a soft labor market, the global scenario remains bleak. For Italy, growth, albeit small, might still be on the cards.

Osama Rizvi is an economic and energy analyst with a focus on commodities, macroeconomy, geopolitics, and climate change.

The above information was taken from euronews.com/business/2024

PHRASE OF THE MONTH
Conta la qualità e non la quantità.
It's the quality, not the quantity, that counts.

Information taken from the Living Language Italian 2023 Calendar

A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

At our March Membership Meeting, Vice President Wassum explained our new arrangement with the Hungarian Culture Club (HCC). Unfortunately, only 35 of our 70 members were in attendance. For that reason, President Paolucci has drafted a letter to all members, again explaining what we are trying to do with the HCC. See Enclosure (1)

MISSION STATEMENT

dichiarazione di missione

The purpose of this Association is to promote the moral, social, and civic advancement of its membership, and to perpetuate the customs and cultural aspects of Italian Heritage.

Article II, Section 1 of the AIH Bylaws

AMERICANS OF ITALIAN HERITAGE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

1 July 2022 – 30 June 2024

President.....Gus Paolucci
Vice PresidentRonald Wassum
SecretaryGlenn Pizzuti
TreasurerVince Pona

Trustee (e).....Rio DeGennaro Jr.
Trustee (e).....Jim Federico Sr.
Trustee (e).....John Perrotti
Trustee (e).....Tony Illano Sr.
Trustee (e).....Ken Mancuso
Trustee (a).....Carmen Frederico
Trustee (a).....Mario Bertone
Trustee (a).....Richard O'Keefe

SOCIAL MEDIA

Be sure to check our two social media sites. Our website can be found at AIHClub.com and our facebook can be found at [facebook.com/Americans of Italian Heritage](https://facebook.com/AmericansofItalianHeritage).

ATTACHMENTS

Enclosure (1) Letter from the President

COMMENTS TO THE EDITOR

If you have any questions or comments about, or suggestions for this newsletter, please put your thoughts in an email and send them to me at GPizzuti@GlennPizzutiArchitect.com