

Columbus

Citizens Foundation

COLUMBUS WEEK 2004

Sicilian Luminarie at Rockefeller Center

Columbus Citizens Foundation



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The Columbus Citizens Foundation supports cultural programs, educational scholarships for financially disadvantaged children and other charitable causes.

Since its founding in 1929, the Foundation has organized New York City's Columbus Day Parade.

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President's Message

The 2004 Columbus Week Celebrations were the most successful in the history of the Foundation. This year, we expanded the Columbus Weekend to cover the entire week before the Parade. We undertook this expansion because we feel it's important that the people of America are aware of the significant contributions that Italians and Italian-Americans have made to this great country. The broadened format gave us the chance to introduce more people than ever to our achievements and to the pleasures of Italy.



The results of Columbus Week exceeded all expectations. Our exhibitions, held in Grand Central Terminal's landmark Vanderbilt Hall, celebrated the great career of Grand Marshal Mario Andretti and the exceptional natural beauty of the Region of Lombardy, which millions of people now know as not only a European capital of fashion, industry and culture but also as a sportsman's paradise.

On October 8th, we lit the *luminarie*, or Sicilian Festival Lights, that brought color and excitement to Rockefeller Center. There, throughout the weekend preceding the Parade, we introduced hundreds of thousands of people to music and dance performances from Sicily and Rome.

The Gala Dinner, on October 9th, celebrated the friendship and cooperation between our two great countries and had the added excitement of a raffle featuring a 2005 Lamborghini Gallardo.

This year's Parade was the finest I have seen, with great historic floats reminding people of the long association between Italy and America and the cultures and traditions of our nations. The Parade was seen by record crowds that lined Fifth Avenue and by an increased television audience in cities throughout the northeast in broadcasts by NBC affiliates, as well in broadcasts by RAI International in Canada, South America and Europe.

We benefited from the presence of several distinguished honorees, starting with Mario Andretti, whose family immigrated to the United States in 1955, setting the stage for the greatest racecar driving career of the 20th century. Mario was gracious and generous, and I'm delighted to report that he was thrilled by the reception he received throughout the Week and during the Parade.

On hand to recognize Italy's close relationship with the United States was Deputy Prime Minister Gianfranco Fini, our Special Honored Guest from Italy, who has since become Italy's Foreign Minister. Minister Fini founded and leads the National Alliance party, which is the second largest in Italy's ruling coalition. Minister Fini flew halfway around the world, from Asia by way of Rome, to attend the event, an effort that is a testament to our nations' shared values and goals. Of all the countries of Western Europe, including Great Britain, Italy has been the only nation to have stood with the United States in every international crisis of the post-War period. We are grateful to Minister Fini for his presence and for Italy's strong, enduring support in the international War on Terror.

We also honored Dr. Richard A. Bellucci, whose innovations in the field of ear surgery have restored hearing to countless people throughout the world, from his native Manhattan to Italy, whose soldiers he has treated, and to Haiti, where he volunteered his time and services. Pasquale P. Diccianni, of the aggregates firm Tilcon New York, has helped build New York from the ground up and been a tireless supporter of education throughout his membership in the Foundation. Non-Member Joseph A. Ficalora, President and Chairman of the Community Bancorp of New York, who has turned his company into the third largest thrift institution in America, was honored similarly for his commitment to the education of our youth.



Grand Marshal Mario Andretti and Foundation President Lawrence Auriana

Special Invited Guest from Italy, Foreign Minister Gianfranco Fini



President's Message Continued.

This year, the major sponsors of Columbus Week were the Regions of Lombardy and Sicily. Special mention must be made of Lamborghini, which provided cars to exhibit in Grand Central Terminal as well as Mario's Parade car and donated the exquisite and powerful Gallardo for our raffle.

The success of the events of Columbus Week is a major source of funding for our philanthropic efforts. In 2004, we celebrated the 20th anniversary of our College Scholarship Program, the 10th anniversary of our High School Scholarship Program and we inaugurated our Elementary School Grant Program, which is targeted to young minds that are in great need of the education and structure provided by private schooling. In the 2004 – 2005 school year, we are helping to fund the education of 474 students. Sadly, this support is critical for young Italian-Americans in our great City, where the educational system has been overwhelmed by demands on its resources.

Our ability to carry out our mission and commitment to education and philanthropy is possible only because of the outstanding efforts of our Members who serve on the Weekend Committees. General Weekend Chairman Louis Tallarini did a masterful job of orchestrating a highly ambitious venture. He was aided by Parade Chairman Alfred Catalanotto; Dinner Chairman Angelo Vivolo; Journal Chairmen Anthony Giordano and Nicholas Donovan; and Marketing Chairman Michael Pedone. I would like to thank all of them, each of whom was instrumental in making the 2004 Columbus Week a great success.

We look forward to another outstanding year in 2005!

Lawrence E. Auriana, President



General Weekend Chairman Louis Tallarini and Parade Chairman Alfred Catalanotto

Grand Marshal Mario Andretti

Mario Andretti, Grand Marshal of Columbus Week 2004, is often referred to as the greatest racecar driver of all time, and he has proven himself a winner in almost every category of the sport. In a career of winning that spanned an unprecedented five decades, he won the 1978 Formula One World Championship, the 1969 Indy 500 and the 1967 Daytona 500, as well as the Champ Car National Championship four times and the USAC National Dirt Track Championship. He was named Driver of the Year in three different decades (1967, 1978 and 1984) and Driver of the Century by the Associated Press.

Andretti's achievements are all the more remarkable given that his family did not own a car when he was a child. Andretti was born in 1940 in Montano, Italy, on the peninsula of Istria, which became part of Yugoslavia in 1945. In 1948, he and his family fled the communist regime, leaving behind their belongings and ancestral home, and moved to a refugee camp in Tuscany.

Life in the camp was modest, with little in the way of entertainment. But in 1954, Andretti watched part of the Italian Grand Prix in Monza, Italy and was enthralled. "I vowed to myself that one day I would be behind the wheel in a race like that," he recalls.

In 1955, the Andrettis immigrated to America and were met in New York by a cousin. They had their first exposure to American cuisine fresh off the boat, as they were driving to the home of their relatives in Nazareth, Pennsylvania. They stopped at a diner in New Jersey, where they had burgers. "I thought that it was the most tasteless thing I'd ever eaten," Andretti says, laughing. "My father thought that it was cardboard. He went into a depression."

In Nazareth, Andretti found a dirt racetrack five minutes from their home. He recorded his first win there in 1959, starting a decades-long career. "The enjoyable part of racing to me was just driving," he says. "I was totally possessed with what I wanted to do."

"Mario Andretti" exhibition at Grand Central Terminal's Vanderbilt Hall



Grand Marshal Mario Andretti riding in a Lamborghini Murciélago Spyder

He recalls notable moments in addition to all of his major victories, such as his team's first paycheck (\$25.00!) and winning rookie-of-the-year honors in 1965. Clinching the 1978 Formula One World Championship race in Monza, Italy, also stands out. "Talk about satisfaction! I always vowed to myself that I was going to win the world championship, and to win that race in Italy was incredible. Those are the moments that are so precious, accomplishing the most ambitious goals you set out for yourself."

Andretti retired from car racing in 1994. Since then, he has founded the Andretti Winery in California and embarked on other ventures, and he often involves his family in his projects. "When we came to America we thought we'd be here for five years," Andretti says. "We had a positive attitude, and we worked hard." Those five years turned into a lifetime filled with goals and accomplishments.

Reflecting on Columbus Week 2004, he says, "It was an extremely positive experience for me. It renewed my pride in my Italian heritage. Starting with the gala, with its elegance and sophistication, and ending with the Parade, which impressed me with its magnitude and popularity, I simply had a great time." ♣



The Cars of Columbus Week 2004: In Grand Central and on Fifth Avenue

Dazzling, stylish sports- and high-performance cars were featured throughout the week as the Foundation celebrated Andretti's outstanding career and Italian automotive engineering and design with exhibitions of Cisitalia, Lancia, Lamborghini and Alfa Romeo cars.

From October 4th through 8th, the Foundation presented "Mario Andretti," an exhibition in Grand Central Terminal's Vanderbilt Hall that featured video, storyboards and the display of four cars that defined his career. Over a million people viewed the exhibits, which included the 1969 Brawner-Hawk Ford that Andretti drove to victory in the Indianapolis 500; the 1964 Gapco USAC Sprint Car, in which Andretti won his first major USAC race; a 1976 Alfa Romeo from the year Andretti helped

the company's team win the World Championship of Makes; and the Newman/Haas Lola T800, in which Andretti won the 1984 CART Championship. Each of the cars exhibited in Grand Central was featured in the Parade, as was a full replica of the 1967 Ford Fairlane in which Mario won the prestigious Daytona 500.



High-performance MV Agusta motorcycles in Grand Central

Grand Central was also home to dynamic, sleek MV Agusta motorcycles as well as two Lamborghinis that were placed in the Terminal's main concourse. The sunburst-yellow and silvery white Lamborghini Gallardos flanked the Terminal's famous information booth and brought a striking visual element to the landmark building. They also served as the backdrops of photographs by thousands of New Yorkers, commuters and tourists who stopped to marvel at the Lamborghinis' sculptural beauty. The yellow Gallardo, which was being raffled at the Foundation's Gala Dinner, inspired one passerby to buy 10 of the 300 tickets up for grabs – at \$1,000 apiece – in an attempt to land the car.

The Columbus Day Parade highlighted six decades of Italian automotive design, starting with a 1947 Cisitalia 202 CMM Savonuzzi Streamliner.

The fiery red two-seater, one of two of the model built for racing, was probably the first car that sported large rear fins, anticipating the design element that remained in vogue for over a decade. Lamborghinis from five decades were in the Parade, from the 1965 Lamborghini 350 GT, which was the company's first production model, to a



Lamborghini cars slowed to parade pace as they headed up Fifth Avenue



A Lamborghini Gallardo in Grand Central, with the Italian Army Band performing on the far staircase

shimmering black 2005 Murciélago Spyder that was Andretti's Parade car. The Murciélago made its East Coast debut in the Parade.

Capping off the automotive entries was a series of vintage 1950s Alfa Romeo Giuliettas, from Milan, which transported models wearing Missoni creations up Fifth Avenue. ♣

Lombardy in Grand Central

Columbus Week kicked off in Grand Central Terminal's Vanderbilt Hall West, where the Foundation turned the landmark structure into an Alpine wonderland. A massive 40-foot photograph of pristine snow-covered peaks dominated the hall and set the stage for a mini-Alpine village, complete with snow-frosted evergreens, a mini-café where visitors could sample some of the Region's superb *Valtellinese* cuisine and an exhibition of vintage Italian travel posters.

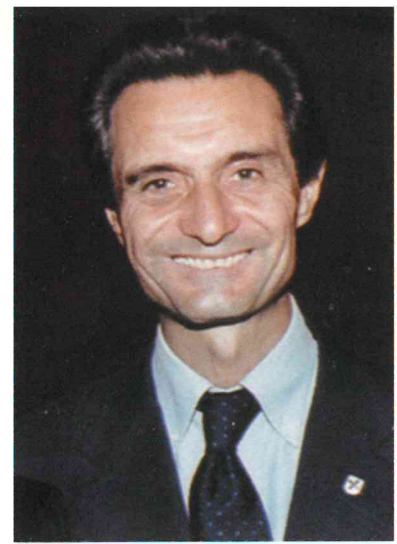
As Attilio Fontana, President of the Regional Council of Lombardy told throngs of reporters, "I am very happy to present an aspect of our region that is not well known – our nature, our mountains and our tourism."

Throughout the exhibition, Lombardy showcased its exquisite mountain region, which is the home of some of Europe's finest ski and mountain-bike trails. The exhibition also commemorated the Region's hosting of the 2005 FIS International Ski Championships, which were held from January 28 to February 13 on the slopes surrounding the village of Bormio.

Lombardy is also host of the 2005 UCI Mountain Bike Championships, which take place in Livigno from August 30 to September 4, 2005. Like Bormio, Livigno is a pristine mountain village high in the Alps, surrounded by breathtaking views and the home of unspoiled local customs and cuisine.

On Friday evening, October 8, following a reception in Grand Central's Vanderbilt Hall, the Terminal's Grand Concourse was the setting for a performance by the Italian Army Band, which arranged itself on the east stairway. Thousands of invited guests and commuters enjoyed the warm, shimmering pulse of the band, as it played music by George Gershwin and other American and Italian composers.

Lombardy is well known for its fashion, and in this year's Parade, nearly a dozen models wearing the beautifully patterned, flowing designs of Missoni rode up Fifth Avenue in a fleet of 1950s Alfa Romeos as the company celebrated its 50th Anniversary. ♣



President of the Regional Council of Lombardy, Attilio Fontana

Grand Central's Vanderbilt Hall featured Alpine-like conditions and the FIS International Ski Championships' mascot, Skiddi



Italian travel posters, a glorious panorama of the Italian Alps and culinary delicacies from Lombardy were among the treats for visitors at Vanderbilt Hall



Sicily at Rockefeller Center

The traditional *luminarie* of Sicilian festivals set Rockefeller Center's Channel Gardens ablaze in celebration of Columbus Week. From October 8th to 11th, eight arches turned the promenade from Fifth Avenue to the Rockefeller Center's Ice Skating Rink into a dreamland evoking a passage to enchantment and setting the stage for three days

the company's founder and artistic director, and her choreography was an inspiring fusion of modern and Sicilian folk dance. The *Compagnia Nuova Danza* had previously premiered the work in Italy, Japan and Australia. The piece is set to a commissioned composition by Toti Basso that melds *Rosa Balistreri*, folk and contemporary music.



The Italian Army Band at Rockefeller Center

and evenings of music and dance performances. Among them were concerts by recording artist Filippa Giordano. A versatile singer from Palermo whose voice slides from opera to pop, Giordano presented a one-hour performance that mixed the soaring reach of Puccini arias and the sinewy rhythms of contemporary music. Ms. Giordano presented an encore at the Gala Dinner on October 9.

Rockefeller Center was also the stage for musicians from the *Orchestra Sinfonica Siciliana* who came together as the Omniart Trio. The unusual ensemble – violinist Massimo Bonanno, bassist Ferdinando Caruso and accordionist Marcetta Salvato – presented new arrangements of music by Bellini, Mascagni, Sollima and Trio member Salvato. The arrangements were created under the supervision of Alberto Veronesi, music director of the *Orchestra Sinfonica Siciliana*.

In its United States debut, Sicily's *Compagnia Nuova Danza* performed the U.S. premiere of Cinzia Cona's "Memories of an Island." Ms. Cona is

Topping off the festivities at Rockefeller Center was a performance by the Italian Army Band, which seemed to be appearing everywhere – including on CBS's *Good Morning New York* on the Friday before Columbus Day. ❖

Filippa Giordano under the *luminarie*



ROCKEFELLER CENTER
OCTOBER '04
FRI 8 | MO 11



SICILY
IN THE HEART
OF NEW YORK

60TH COLUMBUS DAY WEEKEND
HOSTED BY TISHMAN SPEYER PROPERTIES



ROCKEFELLER CENTER
OCTOBER '04
FRI 8 | MO 11



Performances and Tributes Brighten Lustrous Gala Dinner, and The Lamborghini Gallardo Goes to...

Recording artist Angelo Venuto, chanteuse Filippa Giordano and the OmniArt Trio of Sicily joined in an evening that honored Italian-American achievement and friendship during the opulent annual Gala Dinner. Held at the Waldorf-Astoria's Grand Ballroom on October 9th, the evening featured Foundation members dressed in elegant couture by Roberto Cavalli and Vera Wang. Over 1,000 Foundation members and friends attended the fashionable black-tie event and raised funds for the Foundation's scholarship programs.

Tables and the silent auction room were decked out with checkered flags in honor of Andreotti, whose thrilling career was feted along with those of Gianfranco Fini, then the Deputy Prime Minister of the Italian Republic and now its Foreign Minister, Foundation Members Pasquale P. Diccianni and Dr. Richard J. Bellucci, and Joseph R. Ficalora.

In his opening comments, Foundation President Lawrence Auriana said, "We believe that it's important that the people of America are conscious of the significant contributions that Italians and Italian-Americans have made to this great country. With this in mind, we have expanded the Columbus Weekend to the Columbus Week, which began this past Monday."

Minister Fini, who was in Asia on state business that evening, said in a taped video presentation, "America over the past century has done a lot for our fellow country men. It opened the doors to a new homeland. It offered them places to work. And we Italians will never forget the many Americans who died for liberty in Europe. And there are the Italian-Americans who have made great contributions to the progress the US had made over the past 100 years in every part of your vast country. There are in fact thousands of citizens who are dually proud of their American passports and their last names, with their roots from Sicily, Calabria, Veneto and the other regions of Italy. They are men and women who carry responsibilities and in certain cases, in many cases, they have achieved great success. They are leading figures in the world of culture, of sports, of politics, of business, of science."



Honoree Joseph R. Ficalora, President and Chairman of New York Community Bancorp with Maria Bartiromo

"The Columbus Week Celebrations," Minister Fini added, "help strengthen this spirit of friendship, of cooperation because we have common interests, but most of all common values, starting with the most important value of all, the love of liberty. And this is the reason for which, once again, Italians and Americans are side by side in the fight against terrorism, the plague of the 21st century, the world threat to the dignity of mankind."

Dr. Bellucci, the noted ear surgeon, inventor of surgical instruments and the first Italian-American president of the American Otological Society, recalled a pioneering surgery he conducted decades ago. Following the procedure, he visited his patient and found her in tears of joy. "I just never heard the rain on the windowpane before in my life," she told Dr. Bellucci, as she described experiencing one of life's simple pleasures for the first time.

Angelo V. Vivolo, Alfred M. Catalanotto, Louis A. Tallarini, Mario Andreotti, Lawrence E. Auriana, Nicholas T. Donovan and Anthony F. Giordano





Honoree Pasquale P. Diccianni with his wife, Karen in St. Patrick's following the Columbus Day Mass



Mario Andretti with Honoree Dr. Richard J. Bellucci on Columbus Day

Mr. Diccianni, President and COO of the aggregates firm Tilcon New York and a noted philanthropist who is deeply committed to education, said that his grandparents had immigrated to America at the beginning of the 20th century. They arrived "Poor in material possessions but rich in Italian traditions," he said. He reminded the attendees that the sacrifices and achievements of early immigrants "will only be meaningful if we pass on the treasures of our Italian heritage."

Honoree Joseph R. Ficalora, President and Chairman of New York Community Bancorp, emphasized the importance of continuing to strengthen the Italian-American community through the education of today's youth, who he described as "people who can make a better life for themselves because of the support the Foundation is able to provide."

In introducing Grand Marshal Mario Andretti, Foundation President Lawrence Auriana recalled Andretti's importance to Italian-Americans throughout the past five decades. "On a Saturday afternoon in May of 1966," Auriana said, "I first heard of Mario Andretti from my father, a man who never owned a car and never learned to drive. Out of the blue he told me Andretti was on the Poll for the Indy 500. 'He is our guy,' he told me. He gave me the thumbs up, smiled and walked away. Ever since then, Mario Andretti has been our guy. He is someone that the Italian-American community has looked up to, and he has never let us down.

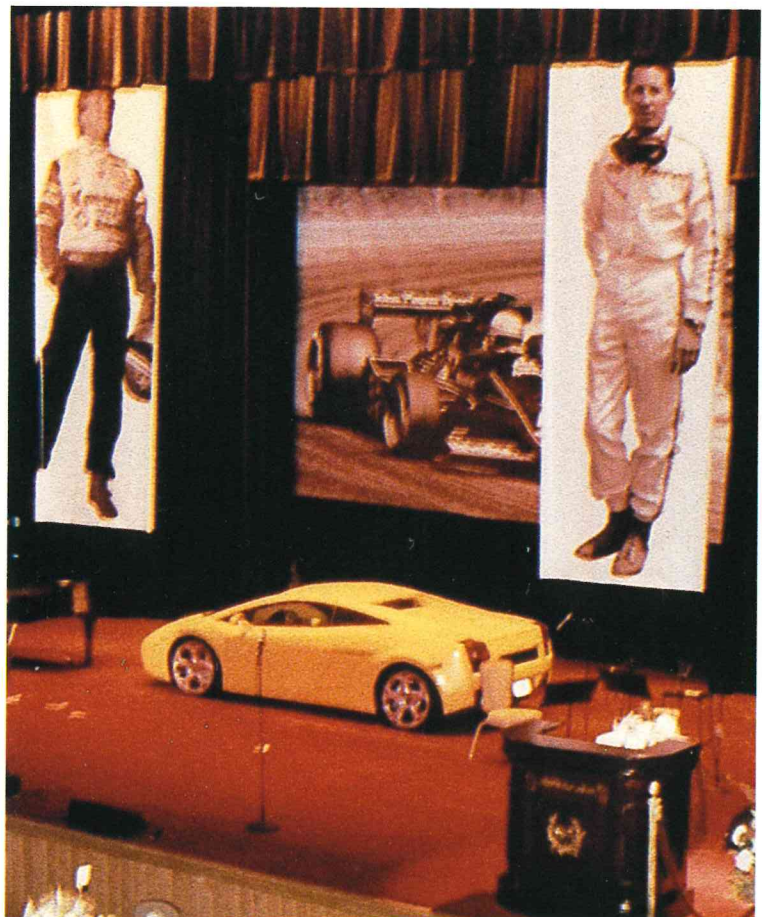
"He won Indy. He won the Daytona 500. And he won the Formula One World Championship – something no one else has done or will ever do again. For over 40 years, he strapped himself into a racecar and drove with passion and enthusiasm at great personal risk.

"He has never let us down in his personal life. He is articulate, personable and a family man. He is my hero – he is our hero and without a doubt the best racecar driver of the 20th century and one of the best representatives of the Italian-American community."

Taking the podium, Andretti said that Columbus Day

was a chance "to think about what [Columbus] accomplished. You think about the inspiration that comes from what he did. Inspiration is courage – courage and a mindset. Columbus was a man who had a goal. Columbus Day is a celebration of his exploration and the achievements of one of our own."

The stage was the setting for the Lamborghini Gallardo raffle. The Foundation sold 300 tickets, at \$1,000 each. The winning number – 28 – was pulled by Andretti, and the winner was Judith Reardon, Chief Administrative Officer of the Kaufmann Fund. The raffle was conducted by the independent accounting firm J. H. Cohen. ♣



The Lamborghini Gallardo in the Waldorf-Astoria Grand Ballroom

The 2004 Parade

One For The Record Books

Red, white and green festooned Fifth Avenue on Columbus Day as Mario Andretti, masterpieces of automotive design and a dazzling display of Italian and American culture and pride rolled north on Fifth Avenue on October 11th, 2004 in the 60th Columbus Day Parade. Drawn by the chance to see Andretti, the Radio City Rockettes, marching bands and Italian folk groups, record-breaking crowds turned out for the event while millions of television viewers on three continents watched the glorious spectacle.

“Today’s parade presented the great breadth and depth of Italian-American history and culture,” said Foundation President Lawrence Auriana. “It was terrific to hear the crowds cheering the musicians and folk groups that came from Italy, the bands starting with the U.S. Marine Corps Band and the dignitaries who have contributed to Italian and American culture and heritage.”


Hundreds of thousands of spectators, waving Italian flags and decked out in red, white and green were awed by the colorful line up of thousands of participants who marched up Fifth Avenue. The Parade was broadcast in three continents by RAI International and in the U.S. by NBC affiliates. The American coverage included commentary by NBC financial analyst and producer, Maria Bartiromo, and Tony Danza, one of America’s most popular performers.

“It makes you really proud, it puts you in touch with your heritage,” spectator Rocco Morello told the *Staten Island Advance*. Morello, a Sicilian by birth who now lives in Staten Island, frequently returns to Italy but was attending the parade for the first time.

A Filipino man who identified himself only as Joey told the newspaper, “If you like parades, this is the one for you,” while a Chinese-American man said, “This is a day for everybody to celebrate, no matter who you are or where you come from.”

Hundreds of families attended the Parade. Keri Gioia, of Staten Island, came with her mother, sister and niece and nephew. The Italian music that moved north along Fifth Avenue brought back childhood memories, she said.

By tradition, the day started with a Mass at St. Patrick’s Cathedral, led by Edward Cardinal Egan, who described the event as a “chance to celebrate the success of the Italian-American community in the United States.” Cardinal Egan viewed the parade from the steps of the Cathedral and throughout the proceedings received visitors, including Andretti and the Special Honored Guest from Italy, Gianfranco Fini, Foreign Minister of the Italian Republic and Attilio Fontana, President of the Regional Council of Lombardy.



The magnificent *Carro Trionfale* made its second appearance in the parade, crowned by a sculpture of Santa Rosalia

The Parade celebrated the old and the new. Actors portrayed the Neapolitan political philosopher Gaetano Filangieri and Founding Father Benjamin Franklin and celebrated their correspondence during the time that Franklin was helping shape “The Bill of Rights.” Italian folk music was represented by the vibrant sounds and colorful costumes of the *Gruppo Folkoristico Internazionale “O’ Revotapopolo”* from Salerno, Italy. Colorful flag dancers from Italy and America animated New York’s most elegant avenue, while a hot air balloon, stationed at Grand Army Plaza, reminded everyone that Italy has been a pioneer in the field of early aviation.

The magnificent *Carro Trionfale*, a gift to the Foundation from Palermo, where it had been used in the 360 year-old *Festino di Santa Rosalia*, was again pulled up Fifth Avenue by four oxen, illustrating Italy’s living, ever-evolving cultural traditions. The magnificent, mammoth float is nearly 26 feet long, 25 feet tall and over 16 feet wide. It weighs approximately 11,000 pounds.

This year, the *Carro* was graced with a contemporary twist – members of the *Compagnia Nuova Danza*, a dance ensemble that is part of Sicily’s vibrant performing arts scene.

Contemporary performers included Angelo Venuto and The Sicilians, whose hit song, “L’Italiano”, was played frequently throughout the fall in New York’s clubs and on radio stations nationwide.

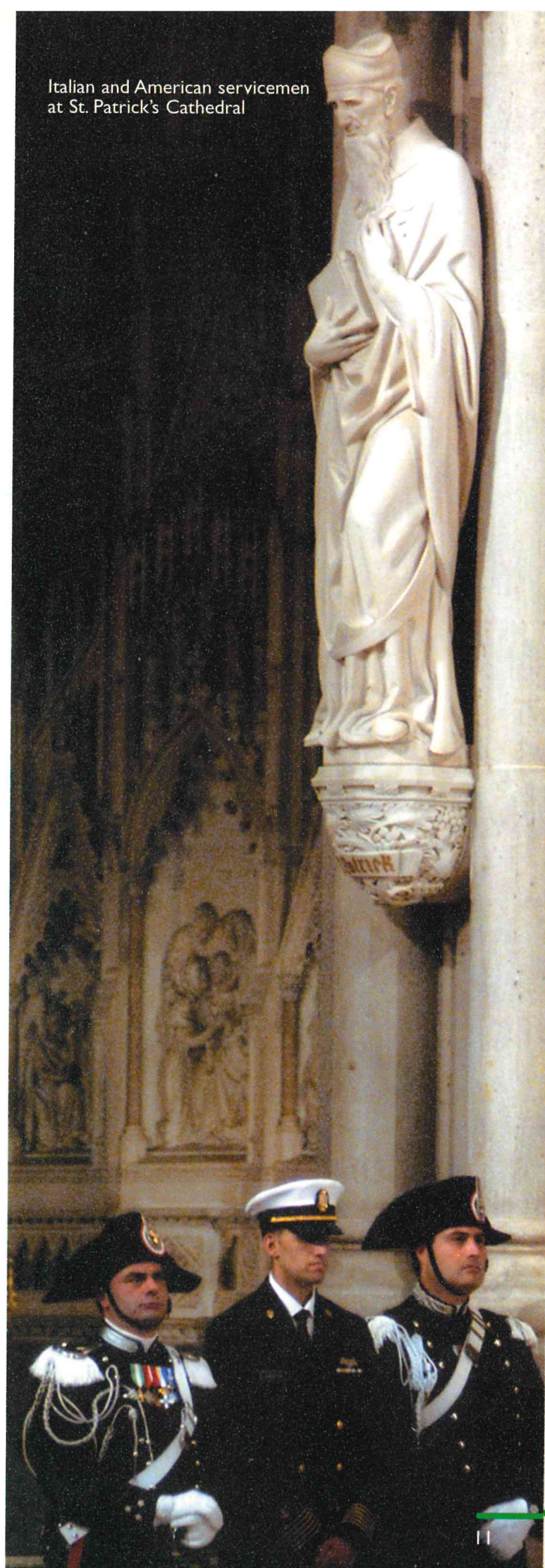
Other Parade hits included five decades of Lamborghini cars, Alfa Romeos of the 1950s and five of Mario Andretti’s race-winning cars, which thrilled car buffs and parade watchers.

Prominent in the parade was Skiddi, the mascot of the 2005 International Ski Federation Alpine World Ski Championships, which were held in Bormio, Italy. Also present were numerous mountain bicycles, signifying the UCI Mountain Bike World Championships which are being held from August 30 – September 4, 2005 in Livigno, Italy.

The importance of Italy in international sports was reinforced by a float bearing a bobsled emblazoned with the logo “Torino 2006,” reminding parade goers that Turin will be the host of the 2006 Winter Olympic Games. Held from February 10 to 26, 2006, the Games will feature 2,500 athletes in competitions in seven venues in and around Torino, in the Region of Piedmont.

Over a dozen marching bands from the North East and Middle Atlantic states competed in the Parade’s competition for best band honors. The winner was the East Meadow High School Marching Band. The Huntington High School Blue Devils Marching Band placed second, and the Monsignor Farrell High School Marching Band placed third. ♣

Italian and American servicemen
at St. Patrick’s Cathedral





Tony Danza and Maria Bartiromo
in the WNBC broadcast booth



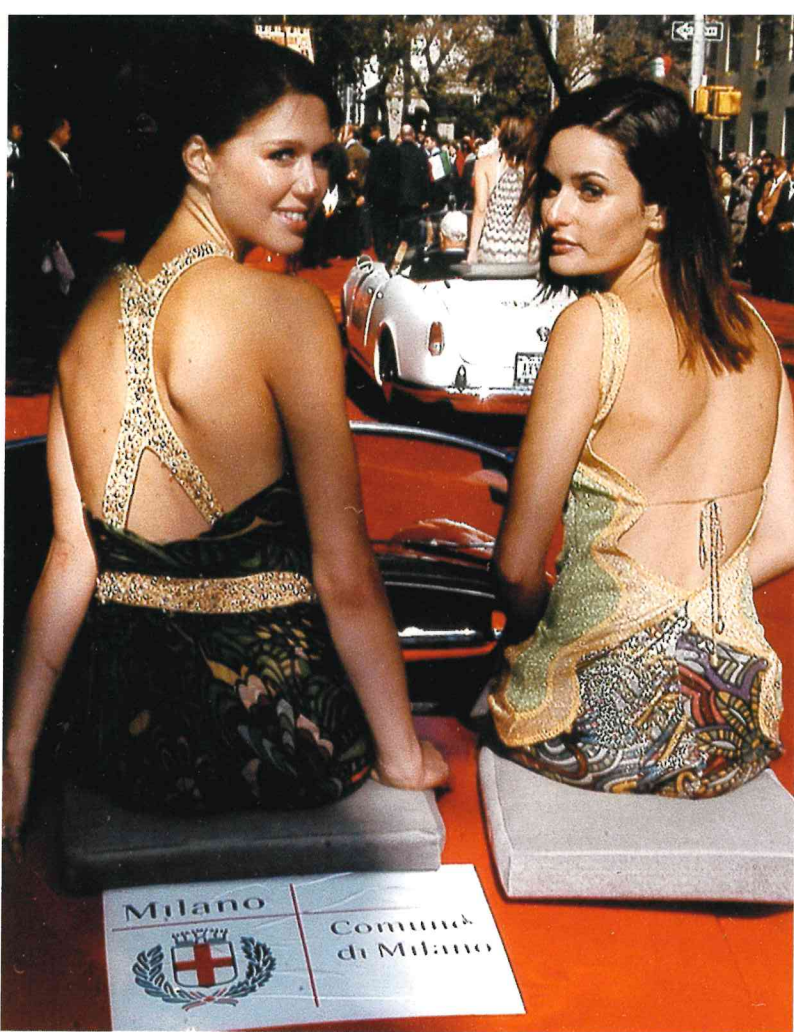
Cardinal Egan with members of the Regional Council of Lombardy:
Giuseppe Adamoli, President Attilio Fontana and Sveva Dalmasso

The 2004 Parade

One For The Record Books

The crowds at the Columbus Day Parade





Milan was represented by models wearing designs by Missoni, who rode in vintage Alfa Romeo Giuliettas

The Radio City Rockettes on the Red Carpet

Angelo Venuto, recording star and lead performer of Angelo Venuto and The Sicilians



© Gregorio Binuya / Reena Ltd.

Philanthropic Committee Nears Half-Way Point Towards its Fund Raising Goal of Ten Million Dollars



Frank G. Fusaro
Chairman,
Philanthropic
Committee

It is with a great deal of pride that I report to you that commitments to our Foundation's Adopt-a-Scholar Program now exceed \$4.6 million – up approximately \$1 million since last reported in the September newsletter.

Based on the success of our recent dinners with prospective donors, we fully expect to reach the half-way point of our \$10 million goal by mid-year.

This fund-raising effort, now just under four years old, has proved to be the most successful in Foundation history and is a testament to the generosity and commitment of our Membership. We now must replace the plaque in the Taverna that commemorates the Program's benefactors. When we initially designed the plaque, it seemed large enough to accommodate the names of benefactors indefinitely. Having to design a new one is a most pleasant and gratifying task.

The Adopt-A-Scholar Program enables a Member or friend of the Foundation to endow a scholarship in the name of a loved one. The donor may then select the scholarship level - elementary, high school or college - as well as the particular school he or she would like to benefit. The Scholarship recipients are then selected by one of our three scholarship committees and matched to the donor's request. In 2005, the monies generated by this program in concert with the proceeds from our extremely successful Columbus Week Celebrations and other fundraising events should enable our Foundation to provide over \$2 million in scholarship aid to deserving students.

While this is quite an impressive number, it represents contributions from fewer than 100 of our Members. With the cost of the Elementary School Program, now in its second year, combined with the high school and college programs, we still have a long way to go to provide adequate funding for the growing number of qualified candidates. We will be hosting monthly dinners at the

Foundation for prospective donors and urge you to attend. Please contact the Foundation office to schedule a date.

A dinner is scheduled for Friday, July 15, 2005 both to honor our Adopt-A-Scholar donors and to have them meet the students and families of the scholarship recipients. This dinner is one of the most enjoyable and heart-warming evenings of the year. It gives the parents and scholars the chance to meet and thank those Members who are providing them with life-altering opportunities. While we all support many worthwhile charitable efforts, our program is unique in that you, the donor, will meet the young scholar whose studies you are supporting. For more information on the Program, please contact myself, any of our committee members or the Foundation office. ❀

Philanthropic Committee Members

Lawrence E. Auriana
George A. Bellini
Dr. Richard J. Bellucci
Peter F. Campanella
John V. Cioffi
Joseph De Gennaro
Mario J. Gabelli
Richard F. Gaccione
Gail R. Guy
Joseph M. La Motta
Anthony J. Marino
Tal P. Piccione
John Pugliese
Matt Sabatine
Carl Simoni
Thomas R. Tizzio

2004 Scholarship Programs

For the Foundation's scholarship programs, 2004 was a landmark year. The College Scholarship Fund enjoyed its 20th anniversary, the High School Program celebrated its 10th, and the Elementary School Program was inaugurated. Highlights of the year included a \$100,000 donation from a non-member and the passing of the \$1 million mark in aggregate scholarships distributed through the High School Program. The Foundation has now awarded over 700 scholarships.

The recent growth in our scholarship programs has been inspiring. When the Foundation inaugurated the College Scholarship Fund, we awarded a just a handful of scholarships. As recently as 1995, we were providing scholarships to just 14 high school and college students in the amount of \$40,000. As recently as 2000,

we committed to four-year scholarships for 50 students in the amount of \$172,000.

In 2004, these figures had more than tripled. We committed ourselves to fund scholarships for 474 elementary, high school and college students.

Our Members' generosity is the driving force behind the scholarships, both in terms of the time they devote to reviewing applications and providing the resources to make education possible for hundreds of committed young men and women each year. But we cannot overlook the great contributions made by the sponsors of the Columbus Week Celebrations, and in particular over the past three years, our friends from Italy. ❀



The first annual Elementary School Grant Program recipients



Students with their certificates at the 10th Annual High School Scholarship Awards Ceremony



The 20th Annual College Scholarship Awards Ceremony



Grazie Mario! Grazie Lamborghini – We look forward to seeing you in 2005!



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