

Il Gazzettino

June 2017

Message from the Board

It's summer, but FOISOH is not taking a vacation! We have many events planned including Italian conversation and Italian language classes, a potluck picnic, a brunch at the beautiful Outrigger Canoe Club, and a blind wine tasting. Visit our website and watch for emails for more details.

Cordiali saluti,

Friends of Italy Society of Hawaii Board
info@friendsofitalyhawaii.org

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Upcoming Events

Aperi-Pranzo (Potluck Picnic), June 25
1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Kapi'olani Park

Parliamo Italiano!

(Let's Speak Italian!) Meetings June 25 and July 16

Brunch at the Outrigger Canoe Club, July 23, 10:00 AM – 12:30 PM

Blind Wine-Tasting with "Musing by the Glass" Blogger Seth Buckley, Hawai'i Loa Ridge Clubhouse, August 18

Italian Language Lessons (New!!)

Start date TBD but probably August 2017

Upcoming Events:

SUNDAY, June 25: Aperi-Pranzo (Potluck Picnic)

Details: It's summertime and no better way to ring in the summer solstice than with a good ol' fashioned picnic in the park! A great time for our members to show off their cooking talents and share, play bocce ball, go for a swim at Kaimana Beach, or just relax under the shade of a banyan tree.

Time: 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Where: Kapi`olani Park (exact location TBD soon)

Costs: This is a FREE event!

How to RSVP: No formal RVSP is required. Since this will be potluck, a food sign-up will be circulated to ensure that the picnic is well-balanced with a variety of foods and drinks.

NOTE: This is the same date as "Parliamo Italiano" - this is not a typo. There is not that much overlap between the Parliamo Italiano and Aperi-Pranzo events so members who wish to attend both can do so without any conflict.

SUNDAY, July 23: Friends of Italy Brunch at Outrigger Canoe Club

Details: Enjoy a delicious breakfast buffet while checking out the surf on your day off. The views at the Outrigger are stunning and the Outrigger's breakfast is excellent. Plus, nothing says "Sunday Mornings" like a Prosecco mimosa with fresh-squeezed orange juice. Special thanks to *Friends of Italy* member Jeannin Jeremiah for the idea and for making this happen! We're looking to add this new event to our event "repertoire" if it's well-attended by our membership

Time: 10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Where: Outrigger Canoe Club, 2909 Kalākaua Ave, Honolulu 96815

Costs: \$35 for members; \$50 for non-members; drink tickets sold separately.

How to RSVP: Zach will email out more specifics on how to register for this event in the upcoming weeks.

Upcoming Events

Parliamo Italiano! continues to meet at least once per month. Jeannin Jeremiah is the host for an informal discussion in Italian. Additional meetings are planned on

- **June 25** - 12:30 pm at 9Bar in SALT at Kakaako –if you would like to attend RSVP (jeannin.russo@gmail.com) **no later than Wednesday, June 21**
- **July 16** - 12:30 pm at Panya Bistro – 288 Ala Moana Blvd. , Honolulu, HI 96814 --- if you would like to attend, RSVP **no later than Wednesday, July 12.**
- Both of these events are **FREE!!**

FRIDAY, August 18: Blind Wine-Tasting with “Musing by the Glass” Blogger Seth Buckley

- **Details:** Break out the wine chillers and "spitoons," it's time for a blind wine-tasting! Bring a bottle (or several) of wine and Seth Buckley, a wine connoisseur and writer for the hot blog "Musings By The Glass", will lead us through a blind tasting to test your palette! This event will be held at the Hawaii Loa Ridge Clubhouse, courtesy of the Rufo's. More details to come.
- **Time:** about 6:00 p.m.
- **Where:** 669 Puuikena Drive, Honolulu 96821
- **How to RSVP:** Zach will email out more specifics on how to register for this event in the upcoming weeks.

Italian Language Lessons – Beginning Level

Information will be sent out by email shortly – These lessons will probably begin in **August.**

Past Events

FIOSOH Annual Board Meeting and Dinner, May 22, 2017

On May 22, 2017 members enjoyed a beautiful sunset beach view, great company, delicious food and dancing at the Outrigger Canoe Club in Waikiki.



Feature Story

Philip Mazzei – Thomas Jefferson’s Secret Agent, Friend and Inspiration For Some Famous Lines in The Declaration Of Independence

By Mark Ethridge



On June 19, 1779, the Italian merchant Philip Mazzei sets sail from Hobb’s Hole on the Rappahannock in Virginia on the first leg of a trip to Europe. He is accompanied by his wife, step-daughter and friend, Francesco del Maglio. His special and secret mission is to obtain funding and supplies for the Old Dominion’s troops then engaged with the other American colonies in the Revolutionary War against Great Britain. Mazzei has been recommended for this mission by Thomas Jefferson.

The idea of using Mazzei as a special envoy to Europe had first been discussed in 1778 with Governor Patrick Henry, John Page, John Hancock, and others. Jefferson had explained that Mazzei could be useful in persuading the Grand Duke of Tuscany to use his “large sums of ready money” to benefit the revolutionary cause. He also noted in a letter to John Hancock of the Massachusetts delegation that “the Genoese are among the richest people in Europe,” and couldn’t spend all of their wealth. In fact, he wrote that much of this money was at that time sitting in English banks, so Jefferson suggested that Mazzei might even encourage them to withdraw all their money at once, thereby causing a collapse of the

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British banks: *“There seems therefore reason to hope we might do something clever with them (the banks) which would be doubly beneficial by supplying our wants, and perhaps rendering our Enemies bankrupt by sudden and large calls on them...”*

Based on Jefferson’s recommendation, Mazzei was appointed as a special envoy by Governor Henry and the Virginia Council during January 1779. He was authorized to obtain a loan of gold and silver, not to exceed 900,000 pounds sterling, and to purchase goods in Italy for use of Virginia State troops. He then signed an oath of loyalty to the Commonwealth of Virginia on April 21, 1779.

After his departure on June 19, he was scheduled to make a trans-atlantic crossing on a French ship, and was just about to sail when the British captured and burned the vessel. Anxious to begin his mission, he took the next available ship, the *Johnston Smith*. Unfortunately, this ship was captured shortly after it had cleared the Virginia Capes. Mazzei and his family were placed on a ship headed for New York for detention. Knowing that he would surely be hanged if his plans were discovered, Mazzei placed his official instructions and commission in a bag with lead weights and threw them overboard before the British could search him.

On August 27, 1779, he and his family were sent to Ireland. There he managed to arrange passage for he and his family aboard a Portuguese vessel and escape from there to La Rochelle, France. Initially exhausted and ill and without his official papers, he had a hard time making any progress. Even after succeeding in getting replacement papers, Virginia authorities failed to supply him funding and other help which would impede his mission. Probably of greatest value was the intelligence he would send back in a series of 36 dispatches to Thomas Jefferson, then Governor of Virginia and his successor, Benjamin Harrison. The last of these dispatches was dated December 9, 1782.

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Although his mission not completely successful, his great efforts were nonetheless greatly appreciated when he returned to Virginia in November 1783. The Board of Trade of Virginia passed a resolution commending his efforts:

“And the Board reflecting on the patriotic exertions of Mr. Mazzei in the favor of this country in the aforesaid appointment, are of the opinion that he has conducted himself therein with activity, assiduity, and zeal, and that the ill sweep that has attended his business is by no means imputable to him but to certain coincident circumstances, and that his conduct merits the appreciation of the Board, of which this is to be considered as a testimonial.”

Jefferson had first met Mazzei when he came to Virginia to develop vineyards in the year 1773. As of 1756, Mazzei had established himself a successful wine merchant in London, and met Benjamin Franklin when he purchased two Franklin stoves on behalf of the Grand Duke of Tuscany. With the help of Franklin and others, he formed a company to establish vineyards in Virginia. He succeeded at this for a while at least, and met George Washington, George Wythe and Thomas Jefferson. He adopted the American revolutionary cause, and published frequent articles for John Pinckney’s *Virginia Gazette*. He even marched off on January 11, 1777 to take part in a battle with the British, which fortunately for Mazzei, did not occur.

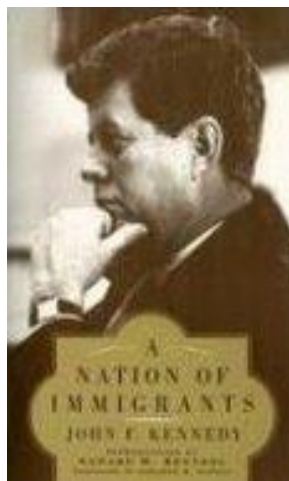
Mazzei and Jefferson shared an interest in politics, exchanging ideas about liberty and freedom, and corresponded with each throughout their lives. Jefferson was influenced by Mazzei’s ideas and writings, and Mazzei in turn, by Jefferson. So it is not surprising that in 1774, Mazzei wrote in an article for ‘The Virginia Gazette’ that Jefferson translated: “Tutti gli uomini sono per natura egualmente liberi e indipendenti. Quest’eguaglianza è necessaria per costituire un governo libero.

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Bisogna che ognuno sia uguale all'altro nel diritto naturale.” (All men are by nature equally free and independent. Such equality is necessary in order to create a free government. All men must be equal to each other in natural law.)

Two years later, Jefferson expressed a similar phrase in “All men are created equal” that is included in the Declaration of Independence. Centuries later, the United States Congress passed Joint Resolution 175 of the 103rd Congress, stating that the phrase in the Declaration of Independence “All men are created equal” was suggested by Mazzei.

In his book, [*A Nation of Immigrants*](#), John F. Kennedy wrote: “The great doctrine ‘All men are created equal’ incorporated into the Declaration of Independence by Thomas Jefferson, was paraphrased from the writing of Philip Mazzei, an Italian-born patriot and pamphleteer, who was a close friend of Jefferson. A few alleged scholars try to discredit Mazzei as the creator of this statement and idea, saying that “there is no mention of it anywhere until after the Declaration was published”. This phrase appears in Italian in Mazzei’s own hand, written in Italian, several years prior to the writing of the Declaration of Independence.



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Mazzei and Jefferson often exchanged ideas about true liberty and freedom. No one man can take complete credit for the ideals of American democracy.”

And of course, the phrase never would have become immortal if it hadn't been written into the Declaration of Independence and America had not won its war with Britain...

After failing to obtain a U.S. consulship, Mazzei returned to Paris in 1785 where he would work for the King of Poland, and eventually go to Warsaw for a year. In 1792, he returned to Pisa, Italy, where he spent the rest of his life. He died on March 19, 1816 after an extended illness.

On July 18, 1816, Thomas Jefferson wrote of his friend: “An intimacy of 40 years has proved to me his great worth, and a friendship which had begun in personal acquaintance was maintained after separation, without abatement by a constant exchange of letters. His esteem too in this country was very general; his early and zealous cooperation in the establishment of our independence having acquired for him here a great deal of favor.”

After Mazzei's death his family returned to the United States and settled in Massachusetts and Virginia. Mazzei's daughter married the nephew of John Adams.

In 1980, Mazzei was later recognized by the U.S. Postal Service with a special stamp in conjunction with its Italian counterpart.

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The tradition of wine-making has been continued by the descendants of Philip Mazzei in Tuscany. The Fonterutoli estate in Chianti has been owned by the Mazzei family since 1435 and has passed down through 24 generations. Ser Lapo Mazzei (1350-1412) a winemaker from Carmignano is considered the father of the Chianti name. He was the first to use the word Chianti to denote a region of production, and therefore a terroir, rather than the name of a wine. The wine “Philip” is a wine “created to both honor the great ancestor Philip Mazzei - a passionate grape grower, forward thinker and citizen of the world and highlight the Mazzei family's special connection to United States.” The Philip is a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon grapes carefully selected from the Mazzei’s estates:

- Castello di Fonterutoli, the historic property in Chianti Classico, producing wines since 1435;
- Belguardo Estate, acquired in the late 1990’s, in the gentle hills of the Maremma region, overlooking the Mediterranean Sea.

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Much of the information for this article was paraphrased from
Philip Mazzei, *Virginia's Agent in Europe*, Edited by Howard R. Marraro,
Ph.D., New York, 1935

and

Filippo Mazzei: American Patriot at

<http://www.bellavita.com/2011/07/filippo-mazzei-american-patriot/>