

“Let L’Esperienza Magazine be your **Passport** to Italian American adventure.”

Dateline: October 8th 2012
Columbus Day Parade: New York City: The 68th Columbus Day Parade; Grand Marshall- Mario J. Gabelli; Honorees: Robert L. Nardelli, Anthony Scaramucci & General Raymond T. Ordieno; Public Service Lifetime Achievement - Chief Joseph J. Esposito; Shown live on ABCTV Noon-3PM up 5th Avenue from 47th - 72nd St.

Well it was a cool October day, but the spirit of Italian Americans was very high as over 35000 personaggi marched in the parade. Remember, what you see on TV is only a portion of what really takes place. The hosts for ABC were veterans **Joe Piscopo and Maria Bartiromo** and there were numerous performances on the Red Carpet but the enthusiasm went to the marchers and the cheering spectators.

The Columbus Citizens Foundation, Louis A. Tallarini - Chairman & Frank G. Fusaro- President, continues to do wonders for New York Italian Americans. “They are committed to preserving and promoting the appreciation of Italian American heritage and culture, providing scholarships to deserving students, and supporting a wide range of philanthropic initiatives.”

Back Stage Pass Series: We have been lucky at L’Esperienza to go back stage recently for: for a concert in Dix Hills; the restoration of the Suffolk Theater in Riverhead; the taping of Rai’s Festa Della Canzone; and today at the Columbus Day Red Carpet. (Not to mention a Stony Brook University Class with NY Italian Consul Natalia Quintavalle and on stage at the Hofstra University Italian Experience Day) (See attached various photos by Benedetto)

Thanks to Red Carpet Vocal Participant **Micheal Castaldo**, we were able to meet and greet VIP’s and marchers, vocalists and dancers. Having marched in the parade since 2000, this was a different “esperienza” being at the finish line, seeing the preparation of the acts and the camaraderie and festivity at the Columbus Citizen’s Foundation.

L’Esperienza Award winners were all around... Teacher **Josephine Maietta** and Actor **Tony Lo Bianco** were marching, Simona **Rodano** was acting and dancing with children, **Chris Macchio and Micheal Castaldo** were performing crowd favorite songs!

While at lunch we reminded **Susan Lucci** that L’Esperienza winner **Jeanette Vecchione Donatti**, who performed for Susan, had recently returned from a vocal European tour including a performance at La Scala, Milan.

An extra special performance was that performed by **Micheal Castaldo**. While he sang his original song, **Pray'r**, a Sicilian dance group enhanced the stage. The vocalist had recently created a concert at St. John's University with a crowd of over 300 persons. He is rapidly becoming in demand and will perform in a sold out concert this Saturday the 13th of October at St. Joseph's Church in Ronkonkoma and at the St. Regis Knights of Columbus for the 95th Anniversary of the Apparition at Fatima.

The accomplished Castaldo with five CD's in hand, including a Christmas CD, has been touring through out the USA, Canada and Europe and soon to be in South Africa!

All in all, it was a very special day for Italian Americans to be proud of. As I was taking photographs, I found myself standing next to a most decorated **USA General Raymond Odierno...**the 38th Chief of Staff of the United States Army!

I was also quite proud when my home town school district, **Connetquot**, energetically marched and played in the colorful uniforms. It also reminded me of our L'Esperienza winner **MarissaAnn Rizzitello** was written up in today's Newsday and how she would be performing on NBC's the Voice.

Marching in this year's parade was another group we are affiliated with, Archbishop John Hughes Council #491 **Knights of Columbus**.

Speaking of **Columbus**, he did make an appearance! Delta airlines float was rocking the boat! Chefs from **Brindiamo** wore their hats. Students from **La Scuola D'Italia** were represented.

The parade on TV came to a close when Joe Piscopo led a rousing chorus of **New York, New York** with the kids in the crowd, Maria Bartiromo, and every one close joining in on the red carpet.

Every one I encountered today was **pleasant and polite**. I drove into the city, there was no heavy traffic and was lucky to find a parking spot too! When I paid my toll on the way home, the attendant said "Thank You." **How about them apples?**

Respectively submitted by your Editor, Prof. Benedetto V Scannella:

Marched in and photographed the parade since 2000, several times with La Comunita' di Formia in America.

2008 AATI Dante Award Winner
2008 Verona NATO Italian Passion Award
2010 AIAE Educator of the Year for the promotion of Italian Culture
2010 Rome K/C Medal of Service