

## PITTSBURG HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Italians' U.S. tour in town

Trio reconnecting with people from homeland for project

By Katrina Cameron  
kcameron@  
bayareanewsgroup.com

PITTSBURG — Local Italian-Americans piled into the Pittsburg Historical Society to share stories of their families' roots with an Italian author and historian on Sunday.

Paolo Battaglia, writer and historian from Modena, Italy, stopped in Pittsburg as part of a 15-city tour of small towns with Italian heritage. Battaglia has explored the United States for 35 days to reconnect with Italians who emigrated to the United States and their descendants for his current project, "Italian American Country," a photobook and documentary.

Italians flocked to Pittsburg during 1860 to 1890 and became fishermen or hunted for gold in the Black Diamond coal mines, said Rosemarie Di Maggio, curator for the Pittsburg Historical Society. Battaglia contacted Di Maggio to schedule a day to visit the Italian-Americans in Pittsburg.

"I think it's wonderful because we've never had a chance to talk about our story, our lives and our situation here after all these years," Di Maggio said.

Battaglia said that he and his colleagues found the city to be a "very lovely town" and that it's "reviving itself" from hard times in past decades.

"They have many beautiful things in this museum, and they tell many different aspects of the lives of Italians here," he said, referring to the Pittsburg Historical Society.

Battaglia ventured from Ellis Island, New York, to the Bay Area by car with two Italian journalists, writer and videographer Daniela Garutti and photojournalist Giulia Frigieri.

The touring trio has met hundreds of Americans with Italian heritage as a follow-up to another book written by Battaglia, "Exploring Emigrant Citizens." Battaglia co-authored the 2013 photobook with Linda Barrett Osborne, in part-



Historian Paolo Battaglia speaks about his book, "Exploring Emigrants Citizens," at the Pittsburg Historical Society Museum on Sunday.

nership with the Library of Congress, to explore the Italian-American experience. The book features 500 photos and delves into 500 years of history.

Battaglia wanted to explore beyond the people who "made the news" and delve into the history that defines the American experience for "Italian American Country."

"There were a lot of people who didn't make the news, and those are probably the people who made more out of their American experience because they were people who were very poor, but they were able to build with their sacrifices something to pass on to their children and grandchildren," Battaglia said.

The "Italian American Country" tour, funded by Italian publisher Anniversary Books, has given Battaglia, Garutti and Frigieri the opportunity to collect an array of material for the upcoming book and documentary.

Throughout the cross-country road trip, Battaglia has observed how assimilation to American culture has molded Italian-American language, culture, religion and food, he said.

He noted that many Italian-Americans typically stop speaking Italian after some generations, but that many of his interviewees felt apologetic for losing touch with their family's linguistic

roots. "The first generation speaks all Italian, second speaks it at home, third understands but doesn't speak, fourth doesn't speak at all," he said. "All the people we speak to are sorry that they didn't keep the old language."

Frigieri noted that the interviewees spoke the Italian language differently than in her home country.

"All the people that we met today, they speak dialects," Frigieri said. "It's like Italy frozen in the 1940s or 1950s."

The three travelers unanimously agreed that the Italian-American food was traditionally consistent-looking on the outside, but contained different ingredients than what the native Italians were accustomed to.

Italians don't typically put meatballs inside the pasta, Frigieri said. She noted that her ancestors couldn't afford meat, so Italians who emigrated to America were able to add it to their meals.

The visitors all agreed that they were impressed by how welcoming Americans were and that no one refused an interview with them.

"I was impressed by how the people are friendly and warm," said Garutti, who's visiting the United States for the first time. "I don't know if it's the average be-

havior, but we've also been welcomed in a beautiful way."

Frigieri noted that Americans were more enthused than Italians about being photographed and that she's usually afraid of taking photos of people because of this.

A typical day of the tour consists of waking up early, driving for hours, making a stop to present and chat with locals, heading back to the hotel, writing about their adventures and posting to a blog before the sun rises in Italy, Garutti said.

Garutti shoots video and writes about the cross-country tour daily for "La Stampa" (www.lastampa.it), an Italian newspaper. The journalist sometimes writes while either Battaglia or Frigieri drives to ensure that she'll meet her deadline.

"We usually publish things around 2 a.m. since there are eight hours in advance in Italy, so people can see them in the morning," Garutti said.

Although the tour was paid for, the traveling Italian trio still needs help funding the "Italian American Country" illustrated book and documentary. Donations can be made at <http://bit.ly/12Ug0cC> to help Battaglia, Garutti and Frigieri reach their goal of \$52,000.

Contact Katrina Cameron at 925-779-7164.

## Sentence

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a minor at the time of the crime. "He didn't give a statement. There was no forensic evidence tied to him."

"He gets three years?" Charlene Barnes told the

judge. "I want three years more with my daughter. This can't be acceptable to you. Please don't let this happen."

Judge Mockler was sympathetic but said her hands were tied.

"I'm not really in a position to undermine the negotiated resolution," the judge said. "I know you want me to

give him more time. I totally understand that emotion. I hear what you're saying. But I have an obligation to accept this disposition."

But before she sentenced Harriel, who appeared in the courtroom's prisoner enclosure, she told him, "You aided and abetted a horrific murder."

There was confusion be-

tween the judge and the attorneys over how much time served Harriel had accrued. It was finally determined he was one day short of satisfying his sentence, so he was ordered back to court Tuesday for final sentencing and release.

Contact Gary Peterson at 925-952-5053.

## Brown

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spend more than he'll allow and by touting ballot measures supported by both major parties, he appears gubernatorial without giving his Republican challenger — former Treasury Department official and asset manager Neel Kashkari of Laguna Beach — a foothold for an attack.

Four polls in recent months have shown Brown leading Kashkari by an average of almost 18 percentage points, and as Brown raised \$23.6 million for this race, Kashkari's lackluster fundraising made him put \$3.1 million of his own money into his campaign.

When Brown finally did start spending money this month, he put \$3.3 million into television ads for the ballot measures. The newest ad, unveiled Monday, is the closest thing Californians will see to a Brown re-election campaign ad this year, but still not quite that.

"We've made tremendous progress: stabilized the budget, once again we're creating jobs and supporting schools," he says in the ad. "With Propositions 1 and 2, we can lock in progress for the future."

At Monday's event, Brown said Democrats and Republicans collaborated on Propositions 1 and 2, but the GOP "is being collaborative because the Democratic



Gov. Jerry Brown, speaking Monday, said the GOP "is being collaborative because the Democratic Party has the majority. ... It's good to have a decisive majority."

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Brown indirectly referred to Kashkari's main line of attack — blasting the governor for appealing a court ruling that voided certain state laws dealing with teacher tenure and discipline. State and local governments work in tandem on education, he said, so the state "has not been McDonaldized" with one-size-fits-all solutions. "We have a more diverse approach to what we do."

Another example of state-local cooperation, Brown said, was "realignment" of the state's overcrowded prison system, which directed low-level offenders to county jails instead.

"I've been doing this for a long while ... but I still

think there's a lot to learn," Brown said.

"That's why we're sending you back," a woman yelled from the crowd, bringing cheers and applause.

Speaking to reporters after the rally, Brown dryly assessed Kashkari's recent television ad on the teacher-tenure ruling — which has a child drowning in a swimming pool until Kashkari rescues him.

"I would've thought that ad was about water when I first saw it," the governor quipped.

Brown said disciplining the state's small population of bad teachers is important but pales beside the more important task of training, hiring and retaining the much larger population of good teachers.

Asked why he hasn't

aired ads or made campaign appearances specifically for his own re-election, Brown replied that the ballot measures are "two important pillars for our future" while he already is "very well known" to voters after almost three terms in his nearly half-century in California politics. "I've laid markers in the ground that people can look at" in weighing whether to give him four more years, he said.

Kashkari was scheduled to speak Monday night to the Young Republicans of San Diego at a Buffalo Wild Wings restaurant and to address a Pasadena Republican Women's Federated luncheon Tuesday.

Brown, who spent the weekend at his Yale Law School class's 50th reunion in Connecticut, apparently will continue in semi-campaign mode this week. On Tuesday, he'll stump at Assemblyman Al Muratsuchi's re-election campaign headquarters in Torrance and meet with reporters at Orange County's groundwater replenishment plant in Fountain Valley.

The rest of his team is hitting the road, too. "First dog" Sutter Brown, the governor's Corgi, is scheduled to "bark out the vote" for Propositions 1 and 2 on Monday night in Long Beach.

Josh Richman covers politics. Follow him at [Twitter.com/Josh\\_Richman](https://twitter.com/Josh_Richman). Read the Political Blotter at [IBAbuzz.com/politics](http://IBAbuzz.com/politics).

## Food

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"permanent culture" permeates every part of life.

"It's a symbiotic relationship with anything in your life, with your relationships with others, with food," she said.

The program was one of a dozen to receive a city grant this year through the Valero Improvement Project account, stemming from a \$14 million settlement in 2008 between the Good Neighbor Steering Committee and Valero over the refinery's environmental impact. The money is to be used to fund environmentally geared community projects, focusing on water conservation.

The Benicia Community Gardens received \$105,680 in the allocation, approved by the City Council in July.

The grant will allow the organization to begin 10 of the 25 seed plots planned from 2015 to 2017. The seed plots will be both on public and private lands all over Benicia.

A seed plot is a piece of land — ranging from 1,600 to 2,000 square feet — that can be used for a food forest.

Many of these seed plots will be housed in a Benicia resident's backyard, such as Schultz's.

As part of the agreement, the homeowners agree to open their backyards periodically to the public for educational purposes over a five-year period, in exchange for free gray water system installation, the design and plants.

Schultz said that's not an issue for her.

"I like to share with others," she said. "Food can be very healing, and I like to empower them."

She said that although she has a couple of things planted in her yard, like lemon and kale, she's open to getting a fresh start.

"I'm open to anything," she said.

What also attracted her to the concept of permaculture is the idea of a sustainable way of living.

"The idea is to not strip

more of our resources, and I'd like to be a part of that," Schultz said.

The increasing environmental consciousness in the Bay Area, including in Benicia, has also contributed to the rise of permaculture.

Toby Hemenway, an author and leader in permaculture, said it has been around in the Bay Area since the '80s, but there has been a resurgence in the past five to six years.

"Part of it is the drought consciousness, and the rise of local food movement has really helped permaculture," said Hemenway, a Sebastopol resident. "It's helping us meet our needs while still paying attention to the environmental needs."

When energy and water were in abundance, there wasn't a big need for permaculture, he said.

Hemenway also gave a presentation in September in Benicia as part of the organization's outreach program.

Professional gardener and project leader David Mudge is excited to see the movement coming to Benicia.

"I do feel that this is the crest of a wave here," Mudge said. "People will realize they want to be more in touch with the food."

Mudge also has a gardening business and said he's been getting more requests from people interested in some forms of permaculture.

Karoulina said the program is for people to work together and share their resources and educate each other to create a self-sustainable community.

She said her goal is to set the structure for small businesses to take over the effort in the future.

Food forest planting is set to begin in January, but information sessions and events to introduce permaculture to the public are set for the next month.

The application period for Benicians to host a seed plot will continue until Nov. 15. Application forms and more information can be found at [www.beniciacommunitygardens.org/Benicia\\_Community\\_Gardens/Permaculture.html](http://www.beniciacommunitygardens.org/Benicia_Community_Gardens/Permaculture.html).

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## No. 20

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