

Exciting News On the Diplomatic Front from Italy



The Republic of Italy just appointed its first female ambassador to the United States, Mariangela Zappia. She is a career diplomat and also served on Italy's permanent delegation to the UN and, prior to that assignment, was on Italy's permanent delegation to NATO.

In keeping with a strict rotation policy, the previous Consul General Lorenzo Ortona (2016-2021) in San Francisco has been reassigned, and the current Consul General is now Sergio Strozzi. Plans are currently underway for a visit to the South Bay.

I was excited and happy to learn at a recent meeting at Il Museo in San Francisco that the prior Counsel General, Mauro Battocchi, has been promoted and appointed as Italy's ambassador to the Republic of Chile. Many of you realize that Chile, Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay are home to long-standing Italian immigrant communities with strong ties to Italy. So I am sure he will be a very busy Ambassador.

Interestingly too, San Francisco and California have had a historic consulate presence even prior to the unification of Italy in the form of the Kingdom of Savoy that later became the Kingdom of Italy. Some of the earliest Italian immigrants to the Bay Area came from Chile in the 1850s! I wanted to add to the article the name of the US Ambassador to Italy but found out an ambassador has not been appointed under the current administration. They have an interim person called a "Charge d' Affairs," and his name is Tom Smitham.

As a point of reference, embassies are located in the capital city of a nation, hence Rome or Washington DC. Consulate offices are located in strategic areas of a nation depending on the needs of the country and special treaties and arrangements. A Consulate also has at its disposal vice consular offices, honorary counsel and vice consulates and consular correspondents. In San Jose, we have an honorary consulate, Salvatore Caruso, who is designated certain tasks and responsibilities by the Consul General. The area for the San Francisco Consul is quite large and includes many Western US States along with special projects including the Italian Cultural Institute, trade missions and services to overseas Italians. There is also a Consulate in Los Angeles with similar responsibilities. — Article by Ken Borelli / IAHF NEWS May 2022