

Febbraio 2013

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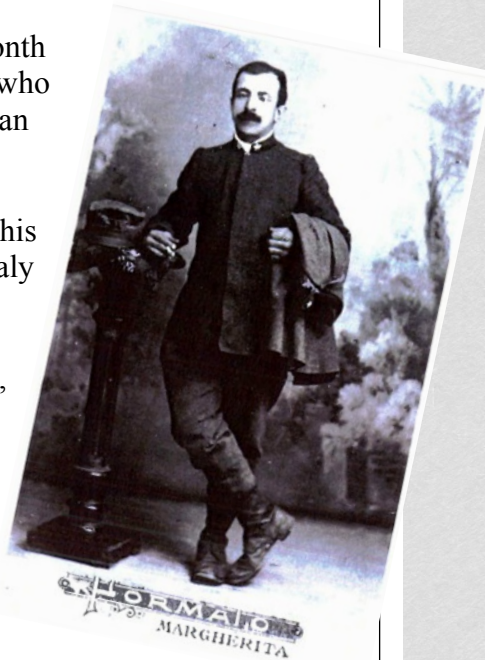


FEB. 17: 'SHROOMS!

We'll convene at 3pm at Carvlin Hall at St. Philip Neri Church, 2408 SE 16th Av., Portland.

Family Matters this month features Bill Galbreath, who will talk about his Italian heritage. That's Bill's grandfather, Andrew Brasesco, who came to this country from Busalla, Italy in 1877.

At most of our meetings, we are featuring a club member who'll share some thoughts and photos on his or her family and heritage. It's a short talk -- about 10 minutes -- and it will help all of us to get to know each other a little better. Will you be our next Family Matters presenter? We'll ask for a future volunteer at the February meeting.



Our featured presentation involves...
The fungus among us!
Mushroom hunting is a centuries-old Italian tradition that continues today.

(See 'Shrooms, page 4)

NEXT MTG:

SUN., FEB. 17, 3PM
ST. PHILIP NERI

FUTURE DATES: MARCH 17, APRIL 21.

MAY 19 ... & PERHAPS A JUNE PICNIC

DAL PRESIDENTE

JUST CALL ME TEVYE!

by Audrey Perino
President



Do you remember the Broadway classic, *Fiddler on the Roof*? In it, the main character, the father, Tevye, sings of the joys of Tradition!

Tevye was Jewish. Most of us were raised Catholic (though not me ... perhaps the subject of a future column). But we Italians are similarly steeped in **tradition**. You'll see the word sprinkled throughout this edition of *La Lettera Toscana*.

(See *TRADITION*, page 6)

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LA BEFANA 2013

Jan. 6 was a special day for over three dozen children at St. Michael's Church downtown. They were visited by *La Befana* ... our own Louise Ramunno-Johnson (center)! The kids also were entertained by magician Bob Eaton (lower right) and they each received a creche -- a gift from the groups which staged the event, our club and Amici d'Italia. A special thanks to Amici and its president,

Kerry-Lynne Dimarinis Brown (who also shared these photos with us), to Louise, to Frank Palandrani (upper left, foreground) who was the Oregon Tuscans' point man for the celebration, and to Frank's wife, Dorrie, who worked the kitchen. For more photos, check our Website, www.OregonTuscans.com.

**BOY, DO THESE PHOTOS FROM *FESTA DELLA BEFANA* LOOK BETTER IN COLOR!!
IN FACT, PRETTY MUCH EVERYTHING IN *LA LETTERA TOSCANA* LOOKS BETTER IN COLOR.
YOU CAN SEE WHAT WE MEAN BY SENDING YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS TO:
OREGONTUSCANS@GMAIL.COM. THEN YOU'LL RECEIVE THE COLOR, ONLINE VERSION!**

WHAT A GREAT MONTH TO BE AN ITALIAN FILM BUFF!

The 36th Portland International Film Festival is serving up an interesting brew of feature films and short subjects this month. There are five Italian films among its lineup of over 100 movies. You can view this year's list of Italian entries by going online. You can see the films themselves on screens stretching from downtown to NW 23rd Avenue to Lloyd Center to the Hawthorne district from now through Feb. 23.



The movies include:

- **Piazza Fontana: The Italian Conspiracy**, a drama based on the true story of a Milan bank bombing in 1969.
- **Reality** (right), which won the Grand Prize at Cannes. It lampoons contemporary Italian society, reality television (in this case “*Big Brother*”) and the media in a Felliniesque way.
- **Shun Li and the Poet**, a bittersweet tale of innocence, immigrants in Italy and the daily grind of life in Venice.
- **Caesar Must Die**, one of this year's Oscar nominees for Best Foreign Film, blurs the line between drama and documentary as it explores the staging of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* by inmates within a Roman prison.
- And last but not least...
The Last Shepherd (right), the heartwarming tale of the last shepherd in Lombardy, an area under the threat of encroaching urbanization. The shepherd's plan: to lead his flock into downtown Milan to let city kids experience a taste of the traditional country way of life.



The Last Shepherd is a family-friendly, uplifting film that should leave us talking ... so let's see it! The film is playing at Cinemagic at 2021 SE Hawthorne in Portland.

Admission for adults is \$11; kids are \$8. It will be shown three times, on Feb. 13 (8:30pm), Feb. 16 (8:15pm) and, conveniently enough, right before our meeting on Feb. 17 (12:30pm).

LET'S DO
THIS!

There isn't enough time to plan a club outing for a specific screening, so let's do this *ad hoc*. If the movie sounds interesting to you, attend one of the three showings. You can buy tickets online or at Cinemagic. The movie is only 76 minutes in length, so if you go to the Sunday showing you'll still have lots of time to get to nearby Carvlin Hall in time for the meeting.

And during the meeting we'll take a few minutes to discuss *The Last Shepherd* and any of the other Italian festival films you might have attended this month.

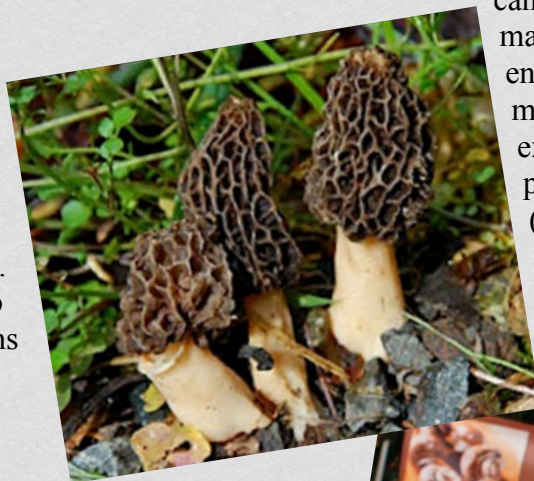


'SHROOMS

(continued from page 1)

Perhaps you hunt for mushrooms. Or you've always wondered what the ins and outs of this hobby are. Or what the attraction is. Well, bring your expertise to our meeting or your questions to our guest speaker, Elan Hagens.

Elan is a professional mushroomer. She hunts them. She grows them. She knows which ones taste good (like the winter chanterelles on page 1 and the morels here) and which ones to avoid. She'll share her knowledge of mycology with us. She'll have some samples to taste and, if you like, you can buy some of her products to take home and enjoy. Elan (right) owns Tempres Truffles, a company which



can be found both online and at farmers' markets around the Portland area. She's an engaging gal who is wild about wild mushrooms! Come share your mushrooming experiences with her and learn about this pasttime which has kept Italians "grounded" (pun intended) for generations.

We also plan to talk about some of the Italian films at this year's Portland Int'l Film



Festival. See page 3 for details.

SHIRLEYMANNOCCI IN ITALY!

We report from time to time on Carlo's exploits in Tuscany. But this month, it's Carlo's wife, Shirley, who is making the rounds ... without ever leaving Salem.

Shirley was invited by the Artists Guild of Sansepolcro (Arezzo) to exhibit six of her paintings at the annual Christmas Art Show held in Sansepolcro from Dec. 24 until Jan. 6.



Shirley was honored to be the only American artist whose works were shown. She received many accolades for her paintings.

One of those paintings, seen to the left, *Nonno e Nipote* (Grandfather and

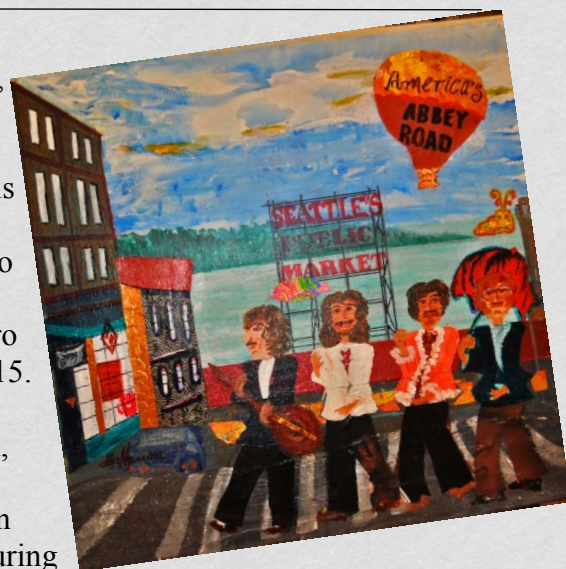
Grandson), is part of a second exhibit. It is hanging in Pieve Santo Stefano in Sansepolcro until Feb. 15.

In addition, Shirley is involved in another touring exhibition. This show, called "All You Need is Paint," commemorates the 50th anniversary of The Beatles. It includes 54 Fab Four-inspired paintings from various artists.

Shirley's canvas (above) is an imaginary scene where Abbey Road crosses Seattle's Pike Place.

The exhibition has already visited Brescia, Vicenza, Sanremo, Gatteo Mare, Cerveteri and Brindisi. More stops are planned, including possible showings in England and the U.S.

Complimenti, Shirley!



L'ANGOLO ITALIANO

di Carlo Ilio Mannocci

La Befana ha portato un regalo anticipato agli italiani: nuove elezioni! Il 24 e 25 febbraio prossimi si ricomincerà da capo, le liste saranno presentate entro breve tempo e vedremo cosa accadrà sempre sperando che gli italiani sappiano trovare la strada giusta e continuare gli sforzi iniziati da Mario Monti per risanare l'economia e risalire il percorso del benessere sociale. Speriamo solo che tutto vada per il meglio inviando a tutti gli auguri più belli di bene, pace e prosperità per il 2013 appena iniziato ...

[Editors' note: Actually, Carlo's Italian Angle teases the other story on this page about our upcoming meetings...]



TWEAKING OUR REMAINING SCHEDULE

We were thinking of staging our second annual club fund-raising auction in March, but the timing didn't quite work out logistically, so we will be shuffling the programs for our next three meetings:

MARCH 17: ART AND POLITICS

Professor Lisa Staley from Clark College will have a presentation on Italian art. Carlo and Jimmie Moglia will also brief us on the Italian parliamentary elections which occur at the end of February. Who are the winners and losers, and where does Italy go from here? You can see here a few of the buttons being worn by supporters of the 119 (!) political parties which are taking part.

APRIL 21: THE OLD NEIGHBORHOOD

Perhaps you're ... uh, "experienced" enough to remember Portland's Little Italy, which basically shared space with the Jewish Quarter during the first few decades of the 20th Century.

This bustling immigrant community stretched south of downtown and west of the Willamette, essentially in the area which today lies beneath the OHSU tram. Its social center was Neighborhood House, where kindergarten classes were held (left) before they became a staple of the Portland Public Schools. We'll take a slideshow tour of the area with retired Boise State University professor Arnie Panitch, who's studied this enclave which was sacrificed on the altar of urban renewal.



NOTE: The April 21 meeting will not take place at Carvlin Hall, but rather at Oswego Summit in Mountain Park. Detailed directions will appear in a future *La Lettera Toscana*.

MAY 19: AN OFFER YOU CAN'T REFUSE

Jimmie Moglia will tell us about the history of the Mafia and its influence in Italy and beyond. Then we'll hold our second annual potluck and auction, where you can pick up items like that blonde bombshell over there to the left. (We'll solicit auction donations in the weeks ahead.)



A NIGHT OF PIEDMONTESE CUISINE

FEB. 20 AT CIAO VITO

The Great Wine Buys shop on NE Broadway in Portland is teaming up with Ciao Vito restaurant on NE Alberta to explore some of the gastronomic joys of Piedmont.

They are planning a four-course, six-wine meal with the food ranging from calamari to cannelloni, and tajarin to pork. The wines similarly run the gamut. The \$65 cost of the meal includes tip.

If you are interested, call Ciao Vito at 503.282.5522.

TRADITION *(continued from page 1)*

Last month the OregonTuscans and Amici d'Italia joined forces to celebrate one such wonderful "blast from the past:" *Festa della Befana* with our own Louise Ramunno-Johnson (right) in the lead role. More about that on page 2. In recent years we have also participated in another tradition, this time honoring the Tuscan wine culture, *La Vendemmia*. And we've taken a step toward the sharing of personal traditions and histories with the Family Matters presentations at our meetings.

Of course, we all know there is a long tradition of superb Italian filmmaking -- just ask Roberto Benigni, Sophia Loren or, if we still could, Federico Fellini. This is one tradition that continues ... and one all of us can explore in the week ahead, at the Portland International Film Festival. You'll learn about your Italian cinema choices at the festival on page 3.

And at our Feb. 17 meeting, we'll explore a traditional Italian pastime: mushroom hunting, albeit in a contemporary, Oregonian way.

But are we overlooking something? I'm mostly unaware of such things since my mother quickly transitioned



from native Tuscan to proud naturalized American upon her arrival in the U.S. after World War II. In her zeal to assimilate into America's melting pot, she ... well, frankly, dropped some of her connections -- her *traditions* -- from the old country. Was it the same for you?

Or are you better aware than I am of other Italian customs which were handed down to you from your forebears? If so, are these traditions which our club should embrace and promote?

Please take a moment or two to ponder this, and if you have suggestions for traditional events or cultural things that our club should "get behind," please bring them to my attention by e-mailing your thoughts to OregonTuscans@gmail.com or calling 503.246.6462.

Ciao!

Audrey

La Lettera Toscana is edited by Ken Kane. Send in stories, suggest ideas, offer criticism or let him know what you think at OregonTuscans@gmail.com or 503.246.6462.