

Marzo 2015

www.OregonTuscans.com



OPB'S SNAFU IS OUR OPPORTUNITY

BY KEN KANE

A few weeks ago, we brought to your attention a documentary running on PBS and Oregon Public Broadcasting called *The Italian Americans*. The four-part series chronicled the experience of immigrants and their descendants in this country since 1890.

The show ran in February on Channel 10 ... well, most of it did. If you saw any of it, chances are you could relate to the story it told. But OPB had a technical problem running the final hour of the series in its original time slot.

That segment, which covered the years since World War II, was probably missed by folks who had watched the earlier installments. We'll fix that at our March 15 meeting. Come to Carvlin Hall that day to watch that final hour ... or, you can bone up ahead of time by streaming it (or the whole series, for that matter) online.

(see **SHOW**, page 6)

*Join us for a discussion
of The Italian Americans
series on March 15.*



**WHAT'S "WRONG"
WITH THIS
RECRUITING
POSTER?
(THE ANSWER'S
ON PAGE 2.)**

NEXT MTG:
SUN., MARCH 15, 3:30PM
CARVLIN HALL

AFTER THAT:
APRIL 19, MAY 17

DAL PRESIDENT A THANKS AND AN OOPS

BY JIMMIE MOGLIA
PRESIDENT



Stefania Toscano gave us an excellent, and palate-tantalizing presentation on Italian cuisine. Stefania manages and operates "Taste Unique" (www.tasteunique.com) and has developed a new and original idea to give us the opportunity to taste, in our own home, some of the delicacies of Italian cuisine, with an Umbrian flavor.

Stefania moved here from Italy with her family. And, given what we learned about the culinary traditions in her Umbrian family, we may say that cuisine has been

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PORTLAND ART MUSEUM FEATURES ITALIAN FASHION AND FILM THROUGH MAY 3



Italian Style – Fashion Since 1945 continues its run at the Portland Art Museum through May 3.

If you make an [online](#) advance ticket purchase, you can save \$5 by using the promo code: **TAO**.

There is a film component to the exhibit, as well as the display of dazzling fashions. Classic films by Italian directors (such as 1962's *Il Sorpasso*, right) are being screened this month in the museum's Whitsell Auditorium. American films with Italian locales are also being shown.

For details on the films, go to:
<http://www.nwfilm.org/screenings/61/623/>



L'ANGOLO ITALIANO

DAL CARLO ILIO MANNOCCI

Gli eventi in Italia si susseguono con la solita musica. Dissentire e' all'ordine del giorno in quasi tutti gli schieramenti politici.

Qualche scricchiolio nelle file del Partito Democratico dove la vecchia guardia risente della quasi spavalderia di Renzi che continua imperterrito per la via tracciata. Slitta qualche scadenza ma si spera sempre che prevalga la buona volonta' e si raggiungano quei traguardi prefissi anche se gli ostacoli sono ancora molti. Grande aspettativa per l'Expo 2015 ormai verso il traguardo finale.

Un sospiro di sollievo per l'accordo dell'Unione Europea con la Grecia, ma anche un po' di apprensione per i recenti eventi in Libia dove l'ISIS sta guadagnando terreno e seguaci con velate minacce all'Italia, geograficamente molto vicina. Aumentati gli allarmi e le misure di sicurezza. Speriamo solo che con l'avvicinarsi della primavera prevalga il buon senso...

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS?



It's an [Italian Navy recruiting poster](#), but it's written in *English*! Explains our president, Jimmie Moglia: "The arbitrary inclusion (or intrusion) of English sentences into Italian scripts or announcements is a new vogue. Especially promoted by politicians supported (and/or bribed in various ways) by the US Embassy." See page 3 for another example of English on an Italian poster.

FOOD FOR THE PALATE...AND FOR THE MIND: ITALIAN COOKING AND POLITICS

(continued from page 1)

naturally acquired skill, transmitted through generations, as it is (or at least was) not uncommon in Italy.

Stefania (below, sharing her 1809 Italian cookbook with us at last month's meeting) compounds her culinary skills with unusual and valuable historical knowledge of Italian cuisine.



Taste Unique prepares a selection of REAL Italian dishes. They are almost ready to be served, after passing through the oven – the last touch at home before consumption.

For those of us used to the grocery-store, frozen “Italian” dishes, Taste Unique promises an overwhelmingly different experience. Thank you, Stefania.

Food for the palate and now.... food for the mind. The PD (Democratic Party), now in government, has announced a Conference by the promising (or so intended to be) title of *La scuola che cambia, cambia l'Italia*. (“The changing school that will change Italy.”)

It sounds promising... except that the very related promotional poster (there to the right) contained an obvious and indisputable grammatical error.

It is true that many Italian politicians, pundits, talk show producers and hosts, have decided to bring the language to the metaphorical dump. But the Ministry of Education's mistake adds contextual insult to grammatical injury.

In Italian, the indefinite article “an” translates as “uno” (masculine) or “una” (feminine). When the term following the article begins with a vowel, the ‘o’ and the ‘a’ are omitted. But, if the word is feminine, the omitted ‘a’ is substituted by an apostrophe. However, to add an apostrophe when the following word is masculine is an error. In elementary school the teacher applied a red pencil, to indicate a reproachable, score-reducing, grammatical transgression.

No big deal, you may say, given the spirit of the times. But the manifesto in question, to announce the participation of none-the-less than the prime minister to the Congress on Education, started, in a tone of praise, *Un'anno di governo 2014-2015* (“A year in government”) – with the unmistakable apostrophe, where ‘anno’ is masculine. Considering that even the Italian spell-checker picked up the error and that the Ministry of Education produced the announcement, we can reach our own related (pessimistic) conclusions.

In our meeting of March 15, 2015 we will show a portion of the recent PBS documentary, *The Italian*



Americans, followed by a discussion in which we are all invited to participate (see details on page 1).

Depending on time, we will follow the meeting with another 20 minute segment of “FDI: Fast, Dynamic Italian.”

Arrivederci!



LUCCA: THE WALLED CITY

TEXT BY CARLO ILIO MANNOCCI; PHOTOS BY FROSTYPHOTOGRAPHY

[Editor's note: Carlo has been chronicling for us his week-long trip to Tuscany last fall, during which he introduced his son Steven to Italy and all its charms...]

Our sixth day in Tuscany was planned to be a day of leisure and relaxation. We started with breakfast and I noticed that Steven was dedicating more time and attention to the daily buffet, always discovering new tastes of the traditional Tuscan cuisine.

We were in for a treat that day as we had been invited to lunch in Lucca by the President of the [*Lucchesi nel Mondo*](#) (Luccans around the world), an association founded in Lucca, connecting the many thousands of *Lucchesi* in every continent to their city of origin.

Among the 10 Tuscan provinces, Lucca has been the most prolific in emigration. Dating back a few centuries, the *Lucchesi* started traveling around Europe selling handmade figurines, artistic creations in plaster of Paris, peddled door-to-door by a *Lucchese* carrying a *canestro* (a large basket made of dried willow sticks).

The sellers were making meager profits and their life was certainly hard, but they worked together facing adversities while discovering new people and new customs. Returning to their villages in the countryside, especially in the Garfagnana area, they recounted their experiences in faraway lands, thus

tickling the curiosity of their *paesani*. The *Lucchesi* were found almost everywhere ... so much so that it was believed that when Columbus landed in America he met a *Lucchese* selling figurines!

Our lunch place was *Il Giglio*, a popular restaurant facing the theatre with the same name – the pride of Lucca, home of composers like Giacomo Puccini, Luigi Boccherini and sculptors

like Matteo Civitali, famous for sculpting the marble sarcophagus of *Ilaria del Carretto*, the young wife of Paolo Guinigi, ruler of Lucca in the 13th Century. The lunch offered an array of delicacies expressing the character of Lucca's cuisine, simple yet superb, elevated to the highest level by the wise use of herbs and condiments.

After lunch, completed by a pleasant conversation and the ritual espresso, grappa or limoncello, I decided to

(see **ETRUSCAN**, page 5)



PIAZZA SAN MARTINO

ETRUSCAN AND ROMAN INFLUENCES CAN STILL BE SEEN IN LUCCA

(continued from page 4)

take Steven to visit Lucca “my way.” Lucca was founded by the Etruscans and became a Roman colony in 180 BC. *Piazza San Michele* and its church (right) occupy the site of the ancient forum. Traces of the amphitheater can still be seen in the *Piazza dell'Anfiteatro*.

The Holy Face of Lucca (or *Volto Santo*), a major relic supposedly carved by Nicodemus, arrived in 742. Lucca became prosperous through the silk trade that began in the 11th Century. Lucca had been the second largest Italian city state with a republican constitution (*comune*) to remain independent over the centuries.

In the 15th Century the actual walls were constructed using over 10 million bricks. The walls were never used for military defense, but saved the city from a disastrous flood in 1812. In 1805, Lucca was conquered by Napoleon, who installed his sister Elisa Bonaparte Baciocchi as “Queen of Etruria.”



The walls around the old town (above) remained intact as the city expanded and modernized. As the walls lost their military importance, they became a pedestrian promenade which encircled the old town. They are still fully intact today and attract thousands of visitors from around the world.

Although I have seen the streets and squares hundreds of times I feel like I am always discovering something new, especially when I am showing my native place to someone else.

Steven and I had a wonderful day and we returned to Montecatini to prepare for our next destination: Venice!

(to be continued...)

**TUNNEL THROUGH
15TH CENTURY WALLS...
WITH 21ST CENTURY GRAFFITI**



SHOW LOOKS AT 125 YEARS OF THE IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE

(continued from page 1)

You can access the video stream at:

<http://video.pbs.org/program/italian-americans/>.

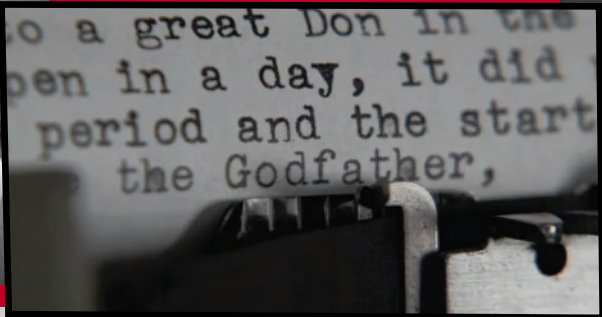
After we show the final hour of the series at the meeting, we strongly encourage you to share your impressions of the show. And, more importantly, we'd like you to share your or your family's personal immigrant or assimilation experience.

What was Portland like for Italians 60 years ago? We know some of you know! Or, if you came to the Rose City from elsewhere, what are your "melting pot" recollections of the period?

This will be a somewhat unusual meeting for our group – there won't be someone at the front of the room talking to us ... this time, *we will be talking to each other!* Come join the conversation on March 15!




VALENTINO



THE ITALIAN AMERICANS

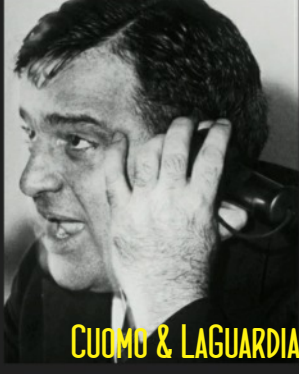



DINO



VANZETTI & SACCO

From swooners to crooners, and anarchists to politicians, to the role of the *Mafia* in fact and fiction, the series *The Italian Americans* provides plenty of fodder for discussion of what it means to be Italian in the USA.



CUOMO & LAGUARDIA



It's been a few months since *La Lettera Toscana* has checked in at WeTheItalians.com, an interesting Internet portal for lots of information affecting Italians and Italian Americans. The Rome-based Website carries all manner of news from politics to entertainment to the environment to business to food.

A quick look at the site as *La Lettera Toscana* was going to press uncovered interesting articles about [Tuscan Pecorino](#) cheese (above left) and an interview with the [Randy Aliment](#) (above right), the president of Seattle's Italian Chamber of Commerce.

An aggregator of information about Italians, particularly those in the United States, the site combines interviews, magazine articles and links to Italian organizations and Websites ... including our own OregonTuscans.com, of course!

La Lettera Toscana is edited by Ken Kane. If you have feedback, story ideas, photos or other contributions for the newsletter, please contact Ken at ken@woodbloom.com or 503.246.6462.