

Aprile 2015

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## TECHNOLOGY'S THE TOPIC APRIL 19

You know that GPS in your car that gets you to our Tuscan Association meetings? Or that yardage meter in your golf bag that tells you you've got to hit your 4-iron 162 yards to the pin? Or your smartphone that always seems to know where you are ... and how far it is to the nearest Italian restaurant?

Well, after our meeting on April 19, you'll have a better understanding of how they work. Our guest speaker is Matteo Luccio, an expert in the field of geospatial technologies. Those are the things that drive those devices we've all come to rely on. They also help make Google Earth the phenomenon it is.

**GUEST SPEAKER: MATTEO LUCCIO**  
**TOPIC: SPATIAL TECHNOLOGY**

**SUNDAY, APRIL 19, 3:30PM**  
**CARVLIN HALL**

This is definitely a case of "great minds think alike" as our club's own resident scholar, President Jimmie Moglia, has invited Matteo to enlighten us. Come to our meeting at **3:30pm NEXT Sunday, April 19, at Carvlin Hall** next to St. Philip Neri Church, **2408 SE 16<sup>th</sup> Av. in Portland.**

**\*  
NOW  
HEAR  
THIS !**



If you missed *The Italian Americans* PBS documentary, ask to borrow Ken Kane's copy at the April 19 meeting.

**NEXT MTG:**  
**SUN., APRIL 19, 3:30PM**  
**CARVLIN HALL**  
**AFTER THAT:**  
**MAY 17**

## DAL PRESIDENTE

### WHAT ITALIANS ARE

BY JIMMIE MOGLIA  
PRESIDENT



During our March meeting we watched the last episode of a documentary\* dedicated to the achievements of Italians in America. Besides the achievements, one underlying goal of the movie was to dispel the notion that somehow Italians are, directly or indirectly connected with organized crime.

To express an opinion, I think the connection has been dropped for quite some time. In fact, the very movie *The Godfather* helped. Why? Because it well defined the personas of that milieu. Therefore, on meeting the average Italian and not recognizing in him the traits of the *Godfather* characters, it is very unlikely that an association occurs.

(see **ITALY**, page 2)

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This year, for the first time, Portland is one of the cities participating in the Italian Film Festival USA.

It's taking place **right now** at the Fifth Avenue Theater, 510 SW Hall St., downtown on the Portland State University campus. The festival ends on Apr. 12 and includes five Italian language films with English subtitles.

For a schedule and description of the films, go to <http://www.italianfilmfests.org/portland.html>

The festival is a collaboration of the Italian Film Festival of St. Louis, Portland State University and the [Associazione Culturale Italiana di Portland](#). The *Associazione* is a new group which grew out of the Azzuri Club of Portland.

**The screening are *free!* (Donations accepted)**

## L'ANGOLO ITALIANO

DAL CARLO ILIO MANNOCCI

La vita politica italiana continua tra gli alti e bassi, con Matteo Renzi fermamente intenzionato a completare le sospirate riforme, con frequenti e diversi ostacoli da parte dei sindacati e correnti dei partiti che formano la maggioranza.

Vi e' stata la sostituzione di un ministro coinvolto in un caso di corruzione, un serio sbandamento del partito di Berlusconi con senatori che abbandonano la...nave, scissioni e accuse reciproche.

Si fanno sempre piu' sentire le ripercussioni degli atti terroristici e azioni militari legate all'ISIS, crescono i timori e anche le richieste a maggioranza di azioni di prevenzione.

Sul fronte locale abbiamo avuto il piacere e l'onore della visita dell'Ambasciatore d'Italia Claudio Bisogniero, accompagnato dal Console Generale di San Francisco, la prima volta che un ambasciatore italiano visita il nostro stato. Speriamo che la Santa Pasqua appena trascorsa porti davvero pace, bene e serenita' al mondo, che ne ha veramente bisogno.

## ITALY AND ITALIANS BRING SMILES

(continued from page 1)

Years ago, a writer observed that, when an Italian introduces himself to a foreigner and declares his origins, the foreigner smiles. Which does not happen with, say, a Lithuanian, a Czech or other. A possible explanation is that, in the collective imagination, Italy is associated with good food, good wines, good art, good life and good times, ideas that can prompt a smile in anyone.

After the movie, members of the association were invited to say something of their own or of their family's experiences associated with Italy or their "Italianness." Hence, we heard interesting and amusing anecdotes. Thanks to all those who intervened.

Our speaker on April 19, Matteo Luccio, was born and grew up in Italy and Italian is his mother tongue. However, he has been living in the United States for 35 years. He is an experienced magazine writer and editor. With a master's degree in political science from MIT, he co-founded the public policy magazine *Oregon's Future*, which he edited for four years.

Prior to becoming a journalist, Matteo was a research analyst on public policy issues for a private think-tank and for state and local government agencies. His career has also included employment as a case worker for

(see **WE'LL LEARN**, page 5)





CARLO & PAOLO



## VENICE: TOURING THE OLD CITY WITH AN OLD FRIEND

TEXT BY CARLO ILIO MANNOCCI; PHOTOS BY FROSTYPHOTOGRAPHY

*[Editor's note: Carlo and his son Steven have been regaling us with stories of their Tuscan travels last fall. But in this month's installment, they venture outside Mother Tuscany...]*

Our seventh day in Italy started with a morning train ride to Florence to catch the *Freccia d'Argento* (Silver Arrow) to Venice. Near Prato, one of the passengers in the train had a medical emergency halting the train at the station, which jeopardized our connection in Florence. We hopped on a slower train thus enabling us to board our "fast" train to Venice.

The train was comfortable and the scenery offered the variety of Italy – from the mountains of the Apennine to the flatland of Emilia (the breadbasket of Italy), with an occasional castle or medieval town breaking the monotony of the green countryside.

We arrived in Venice on schedule and Paolo Brait was waiting for us at the train station exit. I had met Paolo while I was stationed in Berlin with the US Army in the late 1960's. Originally from Venice, he had emigrated to Germany a few years before and he was working as a waiter at the *Ciao Ciao*, a fashionable Italian restaurant

located on the Kurfurstendamm, the most fashionable street in Berlin.

In a few years Paolo diligently saved money and was able to realize his dream of opening his own restaurant. Several years ago Paolo had visited Oregon with his family, now it was the occasion to show me and Steven "his" *Venezia*!!

We walked with Paolo thru the *calle* of Venice, uniquely twisted and narrow streets with local names mainly related to peculiarity and history of the city. We arrived at Paolo's residence which was, in fact, the tiny

apartment where he was born. The place has been totally remodeled inside (you cannot by law modify the exterior of the houses) becoming a cozy and relaxing residence. Paolo and his wife, Gisela, had graciously let us use the apartment while they were using a second apartment located near Venice.



After a lovely brunch we walked to the *vaporetto* (ferry) station not far away from our place. Paolo used his daily experience of life in Venice suggesting that Steven place himself to the rear of the boat thus assuring an unobstructed view of the Grand Canal. Steven was absolutely fascinated by the view of the canal, its bridges, the many gondolas floating around, the variety of buildings dating back to the era when

(see **PIAZZA**, page 6)



# ITALIAN AMBASSADOR MAKES FIRST–EVER VISIT TO OREGON



Claudio Bisogniero, the Italian Ambassador to the U.S., visited Oregon in March. It was the first visit of its kind and included stops in Salem, Beaverton and Portland.

On March 10, after meeting Mayor Charlie Hales, Ambassador Bisogniero gathered with members of Portland's various Italian organizations (left), including our own Tuscan Association President, Jimmie Moglia.

The next day, in Salem, the Ambassador (second from right in the photo to the right) met with Oregon Governor Kate Brown. Also in attendance were (from left) Honorary Consul in Portland Andrea Bartoloni, Italy's Consul General in San Francisco Mauro Battocchi and, to the right of the Ambassador, OregonTuscan Carlo Mannocci, who is Portland's former Honorary Consul.



Ambassador Bisogniero was here to foster business, cultural and societal ties between our state and Italy. For more on the visit, go [here](#).

## DO YOU REMEMBER THE KOSHER – ITALIAN DELI?

There weren't many delis that catered to both Italians *and* Eastern European Jews ... but such was Colistro & Halperin which was located on SW First Av. in old South Portland.

That bustling immigrant neighborhood, long since lost to Interstate 405 and urban renewal, was the city's Little Italy and Jewish Quarter a century ago. This photo, courtesy of the Oregon Jewish Museum, was taken around 1950.

Just think – a place that probably sold lasagna *and* kugel ... sort of makes you think progress isn't always a good thing.



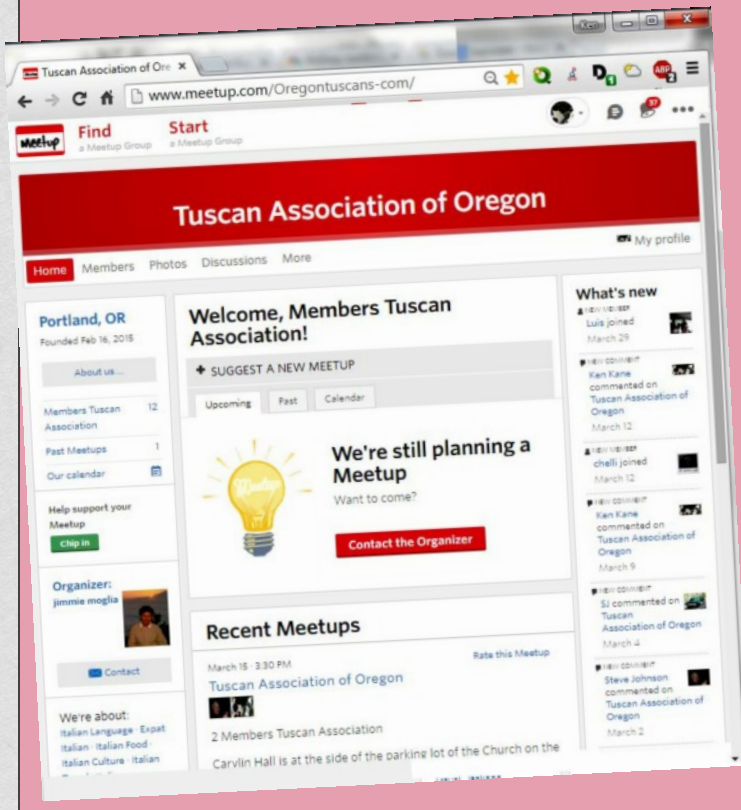


# WE'RE REACHING OUT THROUGH MEETUP

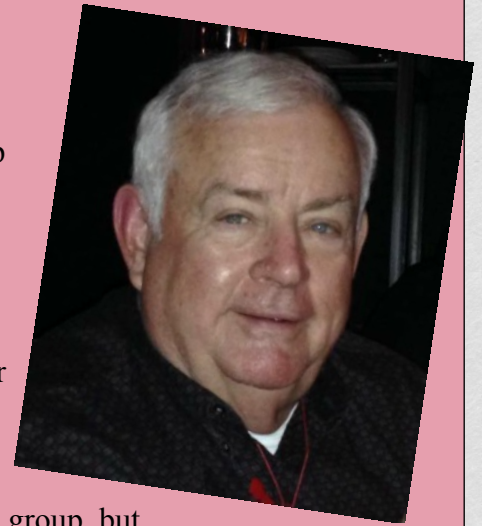
The Tuscan Association has its newsletter, its Website, its Facebook page, and, of course, its meetings.

And now it has its [Meetup](#).

In February, the club launched a group at Meetup.com as a further way to increase our visibility among people who love Italy, its language and its culture.



At our March 15 meeting, our group included its first Meetup recruit, Steve Johnson (right). We're happy to say that Steve (a newcomer to Portland) liked what he saw enough not only to join our Meetup group, but the Tuscan Association itself. Welcome, Steve!



And that's just how Meetup works: it's people (whether new to town or not) looking to *meet up* with people who share common interests. They turn to Meetup.com to see what's out there. As he put it so succinctly when he joined our Meetup group, "I have a life long fascination, love affair with all things Italian... The people, the food, the wine, Opera and art. I have traveled to Italy many times and plan to take an extended trip within the next year."

Steve sounds like the rest of us, no?

Check out our Meetup page: <http://www.meetup.com/Oregontuscans-com/>... and search on the Meetup site for groups with other interests similar to yours.

## WE'LL LEARN ABOUT GEOSPATIAL TECHNOLOGIES ON APRIL 19

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homeless families, as a sailing instructor, and as an Italian teacher.

During the past 15 years, he has edited and written articles for trade magazines on geospatial technologies, as managing editor of *GPS World* and *Galileo's World*, editor and publisher of *GPS User Magazine*, editor of *Earth Observation Magazine*, editor of the on-line weekly *GIS Monitor*, columnist for *Professional Surveyor Magazine*, contributing writer for *Apogeo Spatial* and for *xyHt*, and special correspondent for *Sensors and Systems*. He has also written for several other trade publications.

His website is [www.palebluedotllc.com](http://www.palebluedotllc.com). In his presentation, Matteo will introduce us to the world of geospatial technologies – what they are, how they are used and how they are relevant to our daily lives.



DID YOU CATCH THE *OREGONIAN* INTERVIEW WITH OUR LOVE BIRDS, MARIO & JO MONTI? YOU GOTTA CHECK IT OUT! GO TO [OREGONLIVE.COM](http://OREGONLIVE.COM) OR CLICK [HERE](#).

*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](mailto:ken@woodbloom.com) or 503.246.6462.



# ISLAM AND ITALY ... THEY CAN BE CLOSER THAN YOU THINK

BY JIMMIE MOGLIA

Islamic culture and architecture had a profound influence in Italy and across Europe – notably in the steeple of the Gothic Cathedrals. But also in lesser known cases, such as Arabic calligraphy ... to the point where the artist including Arabic text in his painting or decoration did not know the content of the script he was using.



In Piedmont, in a somewhat remote valley of the province of Asti, lies the Abbey of Vezzolano (left), a Medieval jewel of Romanesque architecture.

In the façade of the Abbey, among other decorations, there are three ceramic roses or circles or basins

(upper far right). In the one on the right-hand side, there are inscribed – three times and in Arabic – the names of Allah and Muhammad.

And this is not the only instance. In an Abbey in the Tuscan



town of Cascia there is a famed painting attributed to the Medieval painter Masaccio. In the halo of the Virgin Mary there is inscribed (in Arabic and in reverse) the “shahada,” the Muslim declaration of faith, “There is no other God but Allah.”

Most likely, Masaccio and the artist who decorated the Abbey were struck by the inherent artistic beauty of the Arabic script. Calligraphy was (and still is) a revered art in the Muslim world. In fact, one of the effects of the invasion of Iraq to find the nonexistent “weapons of mass destruction” was the assassination in Baghdad of Khal-al-Zahawi, considered the “Prince of Calligraphers,” in the art of writing classical Arabic characters.

## PIAZZA SAN MARCO ALWAYS DELIGHTS ... BOTH TOURISTS AND LOCALS

(continued from page 3)

Venice was the “Queen of the Adriatic,” one building after another, each with its own personality, splendor and beauty.

We reached *Piazza San Marco*, the magnificent complex of government and religious buildings showing the unique and characteristic Venetian architecture. Add the vision of the *Laguna*, the thousands of tourists, the colorful pigeons playing with the visitors, and you are really living in the past as history is coming to you... All this naturally accompanied by the incessant clicking of Steven’s camera.

There are not enough words to describe Venice, You must spend time there and fill your spirit with

what surrounds you!

We did not take the *vaporetto* to return home.

Instead Paolo guided us thru the many narrow *calle* back to his residence. It was a constant discovery of fascinating archways, hidden gardens, small canals with an occasional gondola – a gorgeous portrait of the Venice known only to those who live there or those who spend lot of time to discover the soul of the city.

We had a nice dinner at a cozy place – we ate outside, enjoying “people watching.”

We returned to our place to rest, it had been a long but wonderful day... Tomorrow we will return to Tuscany and prepare for our return to America... (to be continued...)

