

Maggio 2015

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LA  
LETTERA  
TOSCANA

## MAY 17: HOW ITALIAN BECAME ITALIAN

Our man of letters, Jimmie Moglia, takes us on a voyage through the evolution of the Italian language at this Sunday's OregonTuscans meeting.

Looking for something to do *after* our May 17 meeting? Jump in your car and drive from Carvlin Hall, across the Columbia, to the 40 & 8 Chateau in Vancouver. There you will enjoy an Italian spaghetti and meatball dinner. It's an annual fund-raiser for the Sons of Italy, Vancouver Lodge.

"It's a nice event and a good, authentic meal," says Frank Palandrani, who's both an OregonTuscan and a Son of

**SPEAKER: JIMMIE MOGLIA**  
**TOPIC: THE ITALIAN LANGUAGE**

**SUNDAY, MAY 17, 3:30PM**  
**CARVLIN HALL**

Italy. "You get salad, spaghetti, bread, dessert and coffee, tea or punch. And beer and wine is available for purchase." Tickets are \$10 (\$5 for children 9 and up; 8 and younger are free) and can be purchased at the door or ahead of time.

To buy in advance, contact Linda Cherney (360.903.0227) or Pier Angela Dimico (360.694.7289).

The 40 & 8 Chateau is located at 7607 NE 26<sup>th</sup> Av., at 78<sup>th</sup> St. In Vancouver. Enter at the Steam Engine gate.

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Jimmie will help us achieve a greater understanding of how the Italian language came to be. But what about Italian surnames – how are they derived? You can see <http://italian.about.com/od/italianculture/a/aa111704a.htm> for some insight.

And for where those names come from, *literally*, go here: <http://italian.about.com/od/italianculture/a/meaning-italian-last-names.htm>



## DAL PRESIDENTE

### LEARNING *ABOUT* ITALIAN

BY JIMMIE MOGLIA  
PRESIDENT



During our April meeting, Matteo Luccio gave us an interesting perspective on Geospatial Technology – showing that just about all the conventional techniques of surveying and land measurement now occur from space.

At the May 17 meeting, I will subject the participants to a presentation on the curious history of the Italian language.

"There's a history in all men's lives..." as well as in the lives of languages. For example, the English we speak today would be quite different, had not William the Conqueror invaded England in 1066, thereby bringing the now Frenchified Normans - Normandy, hence France, to England.

(see **LANGUAGES**, page 2)

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## LOUISE AND WALTER ON THE MEND FOLLOWING CAR ACCIDENT

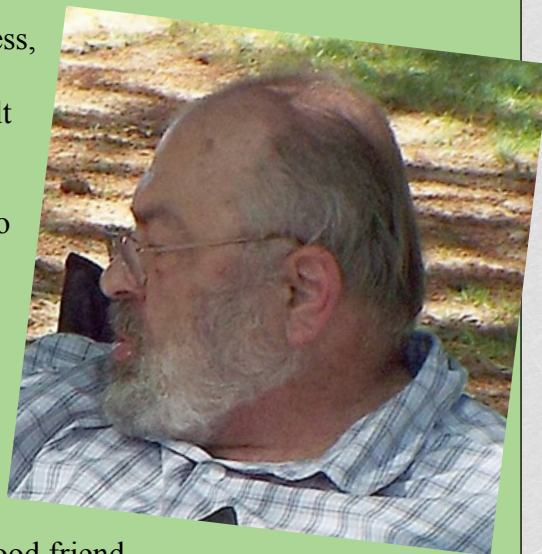
Please think good thoughts for our OregonTuscan friends Louise Ramunno-Johnson, our club Vice President, and her husband Walter Johnson. They were injured in a car accident last week in Evanston, Wyo.



As *La Lettera Toscana* went to press, they were recovering at the University of Utah Hospital in Salt Lake City. Louise sustained injuries to her neck which have necessitated surgery. Walter, who was less severely injured, suffered cuts and bruises.

Louise, who plays *La Befana* for us each January, could use the gift of a speedy recovery. Let's hope the legendary *La Befana* plans to make an off-

season stop to bestow such a present on our good friend.



## L'ANGOLO ITALIANO

DI CARLO ILIO MANNOCCI

Tumulti a Milano dei "No-Global" alla inaugurazione di Expo Italia 2015. Tafferugli con la polizia, auto bruciate, vetrine sfondate, muri imbrattati...

Milano ha risposto con il tipico spirito ambrosiano. Migliaia di volontari di tutti I ceti si ono rimboccati le maniche e, armati di spazzole e detersivi, hanno ripulito la citta'.

Matteo Renzi e' sempre piu' intenzionato a fare le riforme e, pur con un braccio di ferro a oltranza, e' riuscito a far passare la riforma elettorale.

"ITALICUM" e' divenuto legge con effetto verso la fine del 2016. Gaffe del governo che, riducendo le "pensioni d'oro" si e' imbattuto in una sentenza del Consiglio di Stato che ha dichiarato illegale il decreto legge e costretto il governo a rimborsare quanto detratto... un buco dai 5 ai 15 miliardi... E cosi' si tira avanti....

## LANGUAGES EVOLVE, LIKE US

(continued from page 1)

Which means that languages are born, evolve and/or die, depending on circumstances. The circumstances in which the Italian language was born and evolved form a unique chapter.

It was only in the XIX Century that language became the universally accepted signature of a nation and its people (overlooking inconvenient exceptions such as Switzerland, where the official languages spoken are three). Or disregarding the bonding power of language as a mere formality, depending on the political wind – see Ukraine, Yugoslavia, etc.

When Italy became a nation in 1861 only 3 percent of the Italians spoke Italian. Next Sunday's conversation is not an attempt at a thorough history of the Italian language. Still, just like knowing something of someone's background adds another perspective on the individual, the same applies (in this instance), to a language.

I hope you'll join me Sunday for a little history, a little linguistics and a little fun!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Louise".



# THE TRIP HOME

TEXT BY CARLO ILIO MANNOCCI; PHOTO BY FROSTYPHOTOGRAPHY

[Editor's note: All good things must come to an end, even the trip of a lifetime. So it is with Carlo and his son Steven's Italian odyssey...]

We left Venice on the eve of our return to the United States. Our gracious hosts escorted us back to the train station and we left on time with *Freccia d'Argento* to Florence. The trip was unemotional, we did not talk much as both Steven and I were quietly bidding *arrivederci* to Italy.

We arrived on schedule at Montecatini, we both did some last-minute shopping and we had a delightful dinner at the hotel. It was indeed a farewell dinner as the hotel staff came to the table to say *arrivederci* and we had a last toast with Signora Luciana, the classy hotel's owner.

Honestly, like the majority of travelers, our last night in Italy did not allow many hours of rest as our limousine for the transfer to Florence airport arrived punctually at 4:30AM. There was no traffic on the *autostrada* at that early morning hour and we arrived at the Amerigo Vespucci airport with time to spare. No waiting at the check-in and the security procedures were simple and fast. We did stop at the bar for a cappuccino and some freshly baked *cornetti* (croissants).

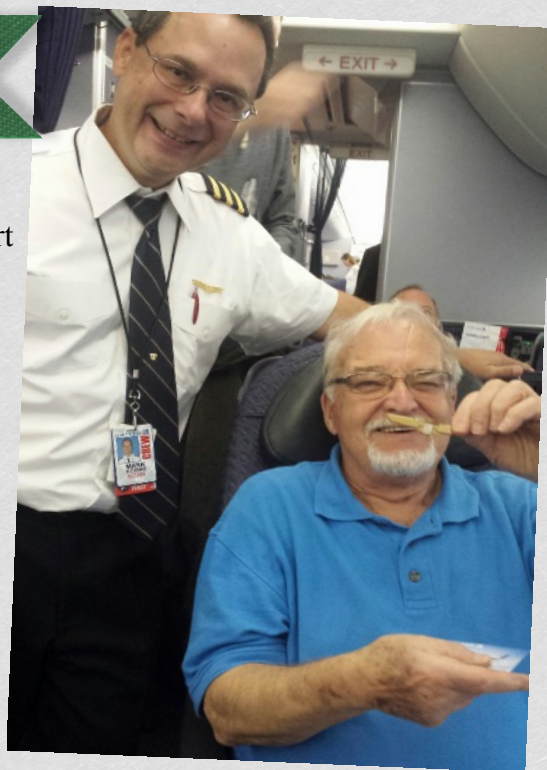
The flight to Munich with Air Dolomiti (a subsidiary of Lufthansa) was short and on time. Due to the fact that the Munich airport concourses are really l-o-n-g I had asked for assistance. An electric cart was waiting for us

and the driver expedited us through passport control. Due to recent changes, the security check at the departing gate had been increased and patiently we went through the most sophisticated scrutiny I have had in many years of traveling. After readjusting our bags, we quickly boarded our flight to Houston, Texas. We were comfortably seated in Business class, enjoying the various perks and relaxing after the early rise.

Steven mysteriously confabulated with the purser and, to my surprise, after the fasten seat belt sign was turned off, the Captain came to our seat and presented me with a "One Million Miler" certificate, accompanied by a set of United golden wings (above). Naturally, champagne followed with a toast. I was pleased for this event, but I realized that I had to fly a lot to reach the goal of one million miles flown entirely with United.

The 11-hour flight to Houston was pleasant – we cleared customs quickly and headed for our next flight to Portland. It was nice to return home with memories of a pleasant and exciting visit to my native land. The major reward was to see the happiness of my son on a discovery mission, which I defined like a "boy in a toy shop." It was rewarding because I had been able to introduce him to culture, history and folklore of a portion of Italy – enough to tickle his interest and to instill pleasant and indelible memories. It was a real joy to see the familiar cone of Mount Hood and the Willamette Valley... Home, sweet home...

(A sincere "thank you" to all those readers who have followed my narration, I only hope not to have been boring and to have elicited memories if you have been to Italy ... or to convince you to go at least once if you have never been there. Carlo Ilio Mannocci)



## A DIFFERENT KIND OF SUMMER RERUN

On June 25 at 7pm at the Mittleman Jewish Community Center, Ken Kane and Arnold Panitch will reprise their slideshow *Once Upon a Time in Lair Hill*, the story of Portland's Little Italy and Jewish Quarter of a century ago. The program was originally created for the Tuscan Association two years ago. If you missed it then, here's another chance to see an updated version with some new stories.

