

Dic. 2016/Gen. 2017

www.OregonTuscans.com



FUN AND CURRENT EVENTS ON DEC. 18

Our annual holiday potluck emphasizes conviviality, the spirit of the season and, this year, a bit of Italian politics. Join us on **Sunday, Dec. 18 at 3:30pm at [Carvlin Hall](#)**, 2406 SE 16th Av. in Portland.

Italian Honorary Consul Andrea Bartoloni will offer his perspective on last week's defeat of a government restructuring referendum in Italy. Singer Jereme Wilkie with entertain us with operatic and Italian songs. And your contribution to the buffet table will captivate us! (Bring any main or side dish, but if you want to bring dessert instead, call Audrey Perino first, 503.246.6462.)

If you want to drink something beyond coffee and tea, feel free to BYOB. We'll eat, drink and be merry ... and sing a few Christmas carols to end the festivities.



BARTOLONI

WILKIE



LA BEFANA

ON JAN. 8, LA BEFANA RETURNS

La Befana is coming! Our annual *Festa della Befana* takes place on **Jan. 8 at 2:30pm at Carvlin Hall**.

The Tuscan Association, *Amici d'Italia* and the Sons of Italy sponsor this event for children aged 3 - 10. Children *must* be pre-registered in order to participate. To do so, please contact Kerry-Lynne Demarinis Brown at 503.287.3255 or difamigliabari@outlook.com.

"Registration is still open, but it's filling up, so do it quickly!" says Josephine Moore, who represents the
(see **BEFANA**, page 4)

NEXT MTG:

SUN., DEC. 18, 3:30PM

CARVLIN HALL

FESTA DELLA BEFANA

JAN. 8, 2:30PM

MTG: FEB. 19

WHAT TO MAKE OF THE ITALIAN REFERENDUM REJECTION?

A good deal of this newsletter and the opening moments of our holiday potluck on Dec. 18 will be devoted to an examination of the latest example of worldwide populism: Italy's sound rejection of former Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi's governmental reforms. The no vote led to Renzi's resignation (click image).



The "no" vote won in a very convincing manner.

(see **DOES**, page 2)

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L'ANGELO ITALIANO SULLE ELEZIONI ITALIANE

DI CARLO ILIO MANNOCCI

Il tanto discusso referendum sulle Riforme Costituzionali ha dato vincente il NO con una stragrande maggioranza. Due eventi in evidenza: Grande affluenza alle urne specialmente se confrontata con le ultime tornate elettorali e ancora una crisi di governo dopo le dimissioni di Matteo Renzi, crisi che, salvo imprevisti, dovrebbe concludersi con risultati imprevedibili data la vastità di opinioni politiche in Italia.

Per ciò che riguarda il voto all'estero su 4,057,000 iscritti all'AIRE hanno votato solo 1,246,000 (31%). ha vinto il SI (65%) il NO ha ricevuto il 35% degli assenti. Sul totale votanti di 1,246,000 vi sono state 119,000 schede NULLE (11%). Negli Stati Uniti su 218,000 iscritti hanno votato in 63,000 (29%) (mentre in Italia ha votato il 69%)., vi sono state 7,731 schede NULLE (12%).

L'alta percentuale di voti NULLI fa pensare seriamente che l'attuale sistema di voto per corrispondenza abbia

DOES REFERENDUM SIGNAL ITALY'S RIGHT TURN?

(continued from page 1)

The sound rejection of the referendum could be seen as the third of the three-on-a-match political outcomes across hemispheres since June: first Brexit, then Trump, now No, No Matteo!

These sites will bring you up-to-speed on the situation:

- The CBS program [60 Minutes](#) profiled Prime Minister Renzi on Nov. 27 and laid out his rationale for the referendum.
- A good summation of the events since the vote can be found on the [New York Times Website](#).
- See [TheLocal.it](#), an English-language Italian news service, or [these Italian newspapers](#) to learn about incoming Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni and his efforts to form a new government.
- And what happens next is postulated by [The Economist](#).

Elsewhere on this page you'll see the vote tallies, as well as Carlo Mannocci's *Angelo L'Italiano* about the referendum. Jimmie Moglia's take on the vote begins on page 3. With all this as background, you'll be ready to hear Portland's Honorary Italian Consul, Andrea Bartoloni, as he shares his thoughts at our Dec. 18 potluck on this latest example of *vox populi*.

delle serie lacune e che si debba seriamente valutare una revisione che comporti più semplicità ed efficienza.

Dopo tutto questo non mi resta che augurarVi bene, salute, serenità e pace per le prossime feste natalizie. Buon Natale e Felice Anno Nuovo!!!

ITALY'S CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM

On Sunday, Dec. 4, the Italian electorate was presented with a referendum which, if approved, would have modified the Italian Constitution, abolishing the Senate and other important functions. The results exceeded the predictions, with the NO winning by nearly a 60-to-40 margin. In a nutshell, here are the results:

OVERALL:

Registered: **50,773,28** Voting: **33,244,258 (65%)**
YES: 13,431,382 (41%) **NO: 19,420,073 (59%)**
Non-valid votes: **392,136 (1%)**

OVERSEAS TOTALS:

Registered: **4,052,341** Voting: **1,246,342 (31%)**
YES: 722,915 (65%) **NO: 394,408 (35%)**
Non-valid votes: **129,019 (10%)**

U.S.A. TOTALS

Registered: **218,407** Voting: **65,577 (28%)**
YES: 32,145 (59%) **NO: 22,460 (41%)**
Non-valid votes: **7,972 (13%)**

Non-valid votes seem to be a problem as evidenced by the minimal percentage (**1%**) in Italy versus **10%** overseas (**13%** USA). It is evident that the system must be revised, possibly introducing a type of "Voter's Pamphlet" in Italian/local language to better educate and assist those voters not fluent in Italian.

Voting results obtained by Carlo Ilio Mannocci from the Italian government's official link:
<http://elezioni.interno.it/referendum/scrutini/20161204/FE011230.htm>

La Lettera Toscana is edited by Ken Kane, the communications manager of the Tuscan Association of Oregon. If you have feedback, story ideas, photos, a letter to the editor, or any other kind of submission, please e-mail it to ken@woodbloom.com or send it to 37 SW Canby St., Portland, OR 97219.

ITALIAN PROTEST VOTE HAS ORIGINS IN CORRUPT 20TH CENTURY BARGAINS

JIMMIE MOGLIA'S PERSPECTIVE

The Italians said “no” on the recent referendum. Its main objective was to reform the Italian Constitution, strengthen the authority of the government and reduce the power of the electorate at large to influence political outcomes. Unskilled in political autopsies, I will not discuss details amply elucidated elsewhere, in the mainstream and alternative media.

Ever prone to scour the useless in search for the irrelevant, I will talk about the three regions (see the map) that voted “yes” in the Referendum.

The most unusual of the three is Alto Adige (South Tyrol). It is a land that Austria was forced to cede to Italy at the end of World War 1. The cost was 600,000 Italians dead and probably as many Austrians. South Tyrol is and was inhabited for centuries by German-speaking people of German (Austrian) roots and culture.

Mussolini first destroyed the old Tyrolean structure of the capital (Bozen – Bolzano) and replaced it with fascist-style architecture. Then he changed all toponyms of South Tyrol with Italian names, banning from use the historical originals.

This and other issues caused continual friction between the established Germans and the newly established Italians. In recent decades the situation improved and the friction, by and large, subsided.

But before the referendum, the Italian government promised that, in case of a “yes” outcome, the original German names would be fully restored.

The other two regions that voted ‘yes’ are Emilia and Tuscany. Here, rather than dealing with the finer details of the reform, I will suggest a wider historical view.

For we can still travel upstream in time towards the origins that led to today’s events, before these origins

fade into a shadowy past and sink into darkness. Or turn into arguments treated by bespectacled and respectable historians, writing histories read by the chosen few and ignored by all others.

At the end of World War 2, as we know, Italy and most of Europe lay in ruin (both winners and losers). And, as per the Yalta Allied Agreement, Europe was divided into two spheres of influence, East and West.

Western Europe was ripe for social reforms, which – it is fair to say – would never have been possible without the fear of popular revolutions. Revolutions that

America was determined to block with any possible means.

The social reforms of Western Europe (as well as the current Italian Constitution) were born in the period 1946 - 1950.

Even so, the Italian Communist Party was the most powerful in Europe – its leader, Togliatti, had even been secretary to Stalin. The Communist threat enabled America to convert Italy into an American military base – there are currently over 114 military offices and massive land, naval and air bases throughout the peninsula and the islands.

Then in the 1960s the situation somewhat changed. Russia continued to subsidize the Italian Communist party, but it was the proverbial chicken feed, compared to the dollars freely printed by the Federal Reserve for use by the CIA everywhere, including Italy.

Partly through a softening of the Vatican position towards the political infidels, partly through the irresistible appeal of power, and of access to the government trough, the Communist intelligentsia (at least some of them) began talking with the their opposition. New expressions came into circulation, for example “parallel convergences” (read, we can work [feed] together while keeping our separate aims but not fighting each other), and “historic compromise” (read, Communists in government).

(see **COMMUNISTS**, page 5)



PORTLAND REVELS HIGHLIGHT VENETIAN TRADITIONS, FOR BOTH YOUNG AND OLD

For 22 years, the Portland Revels have been helping Oregonians cope with the shortest days of the year. The Portland troupe is one of nine U.S. bands of Revelers stretching from Seattle to Houston to New Hampshire. “We celebrate the cultures and traditions of, primarily, the northern hemisphere,” says Revels Executive Director Jenny Stadler. “We explore how those people use rituals, traditions, songs and dances to get through the darkest time of the year.”

This time, their focus is on Venice and one of the first forms of professional theater, *Commedia dell’Arte*. The Revels take place Dec. 16 - 21 at the St. Mary’s Academy theater in downtown Portland. [Tickets are available online.](#)

“Our show, *Commedia Italiana*, celebrates the music but also the comedy that came out of the Italian Renaissance,” says Stadler. People don’t realize that “the [low-art stock characters](#) of *Commedia dell’Arte* can be traced through to comedy today – even to *The Simpsons*!”



BEFANA LEGEND PLAYS OUT ON JAN. 8

(continued from page 1)

OregonTuscans on the planning committee.

The festivities includes food, a magician, gifts and the reading of *The Legend of Old Befana*. And *La Befana* will be in the house, in the form of our own Louise Ramunno-Johnson.

Are you unfamiliar with the story of *La Befana*? There’s more than one interpretation, available on Wikipedia. Here’s a [traditional telling](#). Here’s one with a bit of a [Disney World touch](#)!

Volunteers are needed on Jan. 10 for setting up and cleaning up. And cookie bakers are needed, too. If you donate cookies please drop them off at Carvlin Hall between 1:00 and 2:00pm – and please do not use nuts in your recipes. Please contact Kerry-Lynne if you can help out.



This year the Revels is adding a show aimed at children called *Commedia Bambini*, which runs on Dec. 28 and 29. It even includes a song about *La Befana*.

For more, go to the [Portland Revels Website](#).



TIME TO OPEN YOUR WALLET

We’ll make this short and sweet: Dues are \$25 for singles and \$35 for couples for the next 12 months. Annual dues help pay for coffee, tea, food, printing, mailings, *La Befana*, our Website and renting Carvlin Hall. Dues are due now.

Audrey Perino will gladly accept your dues at the Dec. 18 holiday potluck, or mail a check made out to “Tuscan Association of Oregon” to 37 SW Canby St., Portland, OR 97219.



COMMUNISTS, THOUGH NOT IN POWER, STILL DETERMINED ITALIAN POLITICAL DECISIONS

(continued from page 3)

This (Communists in government), was anathema to the colonial master, who needed then (as now) an enemy to keep feeding the trillions to the military & associates. The issue cost the Italian Prime Minister of the time, Aldo Moro, his life. His name was then given to thousands of streets and squares throughout the land.

Eventually, the “parallel convergence” and the “historic compromise” came about in an unusual and unpredictable way. The third or fourth “republic” was declared ended, to be substituted by a new “republic,” not much different in substance from the one just ended, except for the fanfare and the “hunt for the corrupt.”

This resulted in the substitution of a corrupt legislature, (but with some lingering restraints due to the historical political differences), with a much more corrupt legislature, uncontrolled, uncontrollable and unrestrained, given that the Communist party had blended with its enemy and, together with them, became known for what it is now, the PD (Partito Democratico).

Something similar occurred elsewhere in Europe. For example, to call the French party currently in power “Socialist” equates to choosing “House of Virginity” as a title-name for a brothel.

Back in Italy, now everything was possible, starting with the gradual removal of the social structures installed after the war, followed by the entry into the European Union. A wonderful device, for now the national government could claim no responsibility in the dismantling of the social system, for “it is the will of Europe.” In the meantime, gone, too, was the old structure of production, caused by globalization.

With everyone (in government and in the opposition) at the trough, all restraint was (is) eliminated. The easiest

Way to riches was (is) through Pharaonic never-ending projects and marvels of financial engineering (read fraud).

Just the cost of the study for a potential and very questionable bridge to Sicily is in the billion-Euro range. Olympic villages costing other billions now lay in ruins. No one but the profiteers want the high-speed train line that is defacing the beautiful Susa Valley.

There are already two tunnels, road and railway.

One of the latest ventures was last year’s Milan Exhibition, whose mega-losses were only modestly mentioned by the government media.

Even so, given that the Communists were historically strongest in Emilia and Tuscany, there is some logic in believing that remembrance of things past may have driven some older Emilian and Tuscan citizens to vote accordingly.

Emilia, in particular, was ever the hot bed of Italian hot heads, Mussolini included. In Tuscany, the wide net of nepotistic alliances fostered by Matteo Renzi, the Florentine prime minister, and his associates may have played a role.

Talking of nepotism, the word *nepotismo* comes from the Latin *nepos*, or *nipote* in Italian, for nephew. But why not relative (*parente*), for example, or *familiare* (family member) – what has a *nipote* to do with it?

Brief excursion in the world of uselessness. Back in 1154 AD, there occurred the schism that divided the Catholic from the Orthodox Church. Some of the points of difference were abstruse and theological. In practice, one of the items of contention was the celibacy of the priests, or lack thereof. Priests can marry, said the Orthodox– no, they should not, said the Catholic. The two parties ended up following their own separate ways.

(see, JIMMIE page 6)

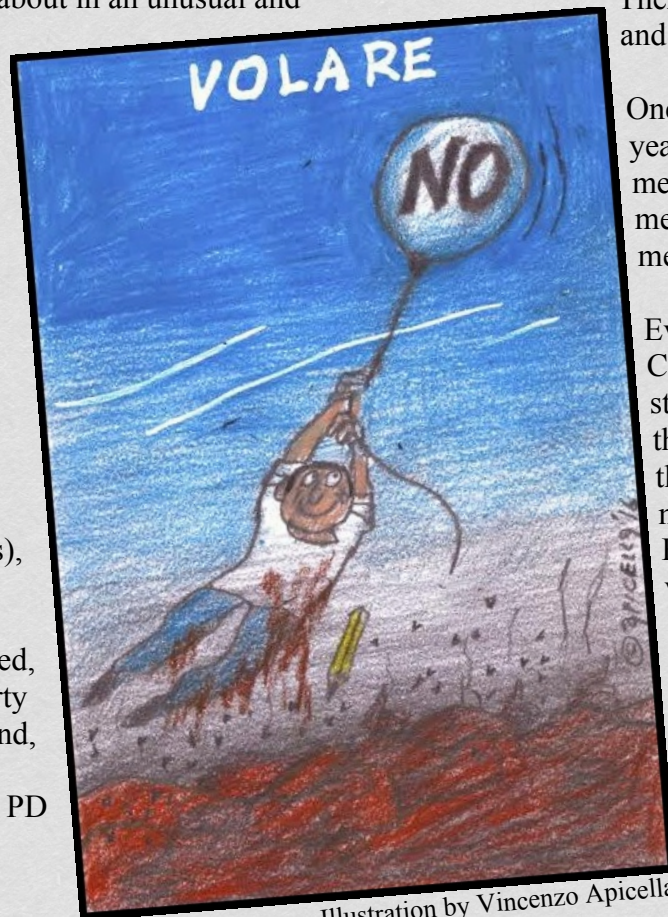


Illustration by Vincenzo Apicella

JIMMIE FINDS LINGUISTIC AND POLITICAL LESSONS EMERGING FROM ITALIAN VOTE

(continued from page 5)

Unable to marry, Catholic priests chose alternative options, including the Popes. For example, Alexander VI Borgia had four children from his favorite lover Vannozza, and five from other “unknown Roman women” – at least this is in the official records.

Popes were generous with their offspring, but they could not claim them as sons or daughters (remember the schism). So, they were all nephews (*nipoti*), hence nepotism.

Back to the referendum. The prime minister resigned from the government but not from the party – hence his political death was greatly exaggerated. Do not consign, as yet, the Florentine boy to the archives of Italian politics. One Italian newspaper defines him as a “baboon taught by J.P. Morgan to perform in the Italian political circus.” And training a baboon is still an investment not to be disposed off too easily.

The statistics on Italian unemployment are a joke. If you work for an hour a week at a McDonald’s you count as

employed. Most young people struggle to find employment. The job un-protection measures passed in Italy and France have just about written off the last remnants of the post-World War 2 social reforms.

Chronicles report frequently of middle-age men killing themselves after their employer closed down or moved operations to the Orient – and they cannot find other employment. Many young people still live with their parents. Unable to find a job, let alone a steady one – their majority voted “no.”

The Italian Internet exudes happiness at the defeat of the referendum, as if it signaled a new era of hope and resurgence. I think their hopes are unwarranted.

Something similar has occurred in the U.S. with the recent elections. Given the Clintons’ stench-machine and entourage (as perceived by a sizable portion of the electorate) even a skunk would have felt as a breath of fresh air. But as for meaningful changes, we can already smell disappointment in the air.

Merry Christmas &
Happy New Year to all
members and friends of
the Tuscan Association
of Oregon ...



20 years of
memories,
friendship,
Tuscan spirit
and happy
moments...
Thank you!!!

Carlo Ilio
Mannocci,
President
Emeritus
& Shirley