

Febbraio 2017

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MUSIC DOMINATES ON FEB. 19

Our next meeting takes place *a week from Sunday*. The newsletter is out a little early this month to tell you about the Italian films at next week's Portland International Film Festival. That lineup appears on page 3. So, go see a film, then join us on **Sunday, Feb. 19 at 3:30pm at [Carvlin Hall](#)**, 2406 SE 16th Av. in Portland.

Our meeting will feature a screening of a concert performed in Los Angeles by a famous Tuscan singer. For the moment, we'll keep the identity a mystery. Gino Pieretti is organizing this meeting and program, and his article to the right will describe the singer in more detail.

Last month's *Festa della Befana* was, like so much lately, weather-challenged. The event was postponed until Jan. 22, but that didn't deter the enthusiasm or the turnout. Thanks to *Amici d'Italia* and the Sons of Italy for joining with us to keep so many kids happy and their tummies full. The photo below and the others on page 5 are courtesy of Kerry-Lynne Demarinis Brown and *Amici d'Italia*.



Our thanks also go out to Maria Nacoste (above), who did a wonderful job entralling the children as *La Befana*, and to magician Bob Eaton. And to those who baked cookies, helped to set up Carvlin Hall for *La Befana*'s arrival and who helped clean up afterward.

Festa della Befana – the sharing of a cultural tradition with a new generation of Italian-Americans – is one of the things that defines the Tuscan Association. Thanks to everyone who took part!

NEXT MTG:
SUN., FEB. 19, 3:30PM
CARVLIN HALL
AFTER THAT: APR. 30

WHO IS OUR MYSTERY SINGER?

BY GINO PIERETTI

He's better than Frank Sinatra or Tony Bennett. They can't do opera. They can't do classical songs. He can't do jazz, but he can do the popular songs and he's got a better voice than either of those two guys!



But he's so much more. Consider for a moment, if you will, that our Feb. 19 singer:
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L'ANGELO ITALIANO: CARLO'S CALL TO ACTION

BY CARLO ILIO MANNOCCI

This month I will dedicate my humble comments and observations to a vital subject concerning all members of the Tuscan Association of Oregon. Like many other associations all over the world our association is facing a multi-facet crisis due to the inevitable aging of members and the advent of the electronic era, resulting in the dwindling of the number of those attending the meetings and the lack of "younger generation" replacements.

There are no immediate remedies and we would welcome useful suggestions. An idea to merge with another local Italian club was considered in October, but was tabled for the present. A similar idea could be to hold joint meetings with another club. This could avoid duplication of effort and might save money, particularly on room rental. But retaining

the proper and unique identity of the associations involved could prove challenging as we try to expand participation in activities.

From experience I can tell you that the definition of "Mission Impossible" came from the efforts to make three Italians agree! Or, in the current situation facing the Tuscan Association, making three Italians step up!

The most important thing for the short-term viability of our club must be to encourage more members to come FORWARD and SUPPORT the club by taking a more active role.

Above all we MUST have the desire and the strong will of wanting to preserve what we have while looking to the future ... Let's do it!!!

SINGER IS A PERSON OF NOTE ... NOT JUST NOTES. HE'S GINO'S FAVORITE AND MAYBE YOURS, TOO.

(continued from page 1)

- He was born in Lajalica, a rural Tuscan farming town about 20 miles from Pisa, in 1958.
- He was born with glaucoma. He lost all sight at age 12 because of a brain hemorrhage stemming from a soccer injury.
- At age 6 he memorized his favorite opera, *La Boheme*.
- His goal in life was to be a singer, but after graduating from the University of Pisa, he enrolled in law school when he was 27, to satisfy his father. He worked as a lawyer for a year, but then quit, deciding to follow his destiny, to become a successful professional singer.
- He got his first big break in 1992 when he recorded the Italian popular song *Miserere* with the Italian rock star Zucchero Fornaciari. Two years later he took first prize at the San Remo Music Festival. He continued his opera studies with teachers of Maria Calas and Luciano Pavarotti.
- He's sung in 30 countries and in six languages.
- His success has led to the creation of a foundation to fund research at MIT to develop methods and equipment to help the blind with their daily activities. His foundation also provides financial support to the people, and especially the children, of Haiti.



By now I'm sure you've determined that our mystery singer is Andrea Bocelli. At our meeting on Feb. 19 we'll watch a DVD of his 2015 PBS *Great Performances* concert with an orchestra in Los Angeles. The concert focuses on music by both American and Italian film composers, including Irving Berlin, Ennio Morricone, Giovanni Rota, Henry Mancini and Leonard Bernstein. (Here's [Maria from West Side Story](#).) Bocelli sings in both Italian and English.

If you had attended the Los Angeles concert it would have easily cost you \$50 for a ticket. Come to Carvlin Hall on Feb. 19 instead, where you will have a *free* front row seat at a concert by one of the world's most popular singers of opera, classical and popular music – with refreshments, no less! And bring a friend. You'll be glad you did!

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.

THREE ITALIAN MOVIES INCLUDED IN 40TH PORTLAND INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

The weather stinks ... still. Forget the flu – you're dealing with multiple bouts of cabin fever this winter. What are you gonna do?

Well, wait for a break in the storms sometime in the next two weeks, then head out for a foreign film ... particularly an Italian one.

The [40th Portland International Film Festival](#) begins on Feb. 9 and, right out of the box (or film can) come a trio of Italian movies. One is a contemporary fairy tale, another a female buddy movie along the lines of *Thelma and Louise*, and the last a movie for our times: a documentary about refugees near Sicily.

Indivisibili (*Indivisible*) stars actresses who, in real life, are identical twins. In the film, they are, literally, joined at the hip. Their conjoined status and their ability to sing make them bankable – and keeps them under the thumb of their parents. But the story turns once they learn they can be safely separated. [Here is the trailer.](#)

[Variety](#), which liked the film, says it has “the feel of updated folklore – a Brothers Grimm classic, perhaps [which] despite its neo-gothic trappings ... is at heart warm and accessible.”

Indivisible plays on the evenings of Feb. 10 & Feb. 12.

Loco Alegria (*Like Crazy*) is a tale of two psychiatric

patients on the run. Their odyssey starts out by chance when their work van is late, but their escape “turns the remainder of the film into an exploration of what

happiness is, how it can be found and what it really means to be ‘crazy,’” according to [The Hollywood Reporter](#). Here's a [clip](#).

Like Crazy will be screened on the evenings of Feb. 11 & Feb. 13.

Fuocoammare (*Fire at Sea*) looks at the Italian island of Lampedusa, which is actually closer to Tunisia than Sicily. It is a spare, rocky place, much like the documentary itself.

Fire at Sea looks at life on Lampedusa for those who live there freely as well as for the refugees who risk death trying to reach it. A series of real-life character studies and vignettes, the film avoids narration, a sound track and a do-gooder point-of-view.

The [New York Times](#) has written that “*Fire at Sea* is impressionistic and intensely absorbing ... it compels you to infer a big picture from a series of extended, intimate scenes.” [You can see the trailer here.](#)

Fire at Sea plays on Sunday morning Feb. 12 & on the evening of Feb. 15.

There are dozens of films at the festival, representing 58 countries, ranging from Croatia to Cuba and South Africa to South Korea. All films are subtitled or in English. For more on the festival, including the locations of the Italian films and how to buy tickets, go to the [Festival Website](#).





UNCLE AUD SAYS:

I WANT YOU TO PAY YOUR DUES!

DON'T MAKE ME NAME NAMES ... I WILL!

\$25 single/\$35 couple
Pay at the Feb. 19 meeting
or mail a check to
37 SW CANBY ST.
PORTLAND 97219

DO YOU KNOW...

of the other tie that binds Oregon and Tuscany – the one besides our club?

Although it may be little more than a naming coincidence, Tuscany and Oregon have shared something stark and sad for nearly a century.

The Feb. 5 *Oregonian* told the story, which dates back to World War I. If you know the history of the *Lusitania*, or have read Erik Larson's book *Dead Wake* about the ship, then the story of the *Tuscania* will sound all too familiar. [Read it here.](#)

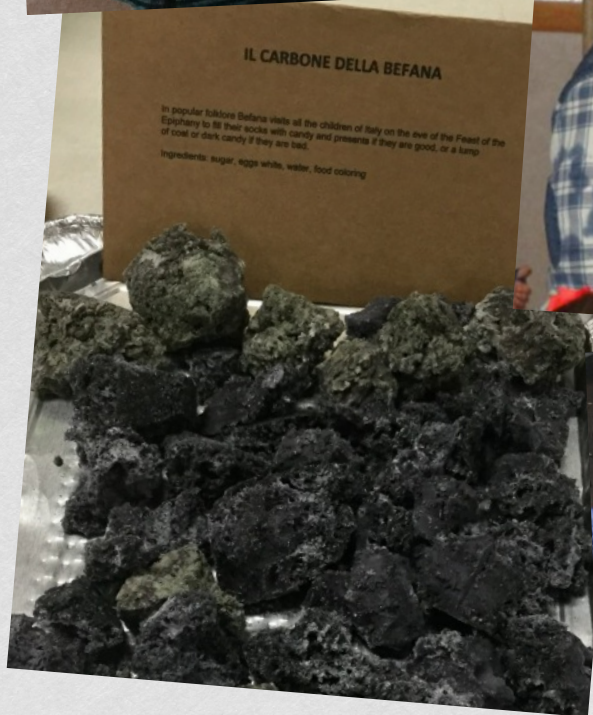


ITALY'S SOUTH TYROL: A WOODCARVER'S PARADISE

Check out the story from FluxMagazine.com about wood artists in an area known more for the rocky Dolomites and skiing than for its wood sculptors. These artisans combine time-honored technique with technology to create stunning works. [Read it here.](#)



***FESTA DELLA
BEFANA JAN. 22:
COOKIES, MAGIC,
FOLKLORE,
FRIENDS & FUN!***





FOOD AND SONG ... AND ITALIAN POLITICS, IN TIME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Our holiday potluck on Dec. 18, 2016 was educational, entertaining and definitely *full-filling*. And, like *Festa della Befana* last month, it was weather-challenged. So, if you couldn't make it, here's a brief summary:

We began with a briefing on the current Italian political situation from Portland's Honorary Italian Consul Andrea Bartoloni (right). That was followed by a sumptuous meal provided by our members, all of whom brought something to share. Finally, we enjoyed a performance of holiday carols by Portland State music students Colin Sheperd and Jereme Wilkie (below). [Here's a sample.](#) It was a great way to celebrate the season!

