

Maggio 2018

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## MAY 20: HOW TO BE AN EXPATRIATE

Raising a family may be life's most challenging task. Doing so 5,500 miles from home, in a foreign language, for a year? Now that's a *daunting* task. But it's one that Jacqueline Jannotta Rothenberg met and conquered. She and her husband, Nick, along with their two daughters, Téa and Chiara, moved to Genoa in 2013 for a year. Since returning, they've gone back to Italy for shorter visits.

Jacqueline has written a [blog](#) and a [magazine article](#) about her year in Genoa and is in the midst of writing a book on the subject. **Jacqueline will be our guest speaker on May 20, at 3:00pm in the [community room at Oswego Summit](#).** *La Lettera Toscana* recently asked Jacqueline some questions about her family's Genovese experience...



*An interest in tracing your ancestors' roots in Italy and the desire for you and your husband to take an extended sabbatical helped plant the idea of a year in Italy in your head. But what convinced you to take your family over to Italy to live for a year? In other words, was there one "tipping point" or one revelation which caused you to think, "We really can DO this!"?*

The revelation that tipped me over the edge came in the form of a simple question: If, at the end of my life, I reflect on my biggest fulfillments and my biggest regrets, will our family year in Italy fall under the former category or the latter category?

I did not want my dream of living in Italy to fall under the  
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**NEXT MTG:**  
**SUN., MAY 20, 3:00PM**  
**215 OSWEGO SUMMIT**  
**LAKE OSWEGO**  
**AFTER THAT: JULY 15**  
**BBQ!**

## INTO THE BREACH STEP GEORGE AND ANTONELLA

Perhaps the Tuscan Association of Oregon should be renamed the Tuscan Association of *Phoenix*...because out of the ashes of uncertainty a new leadership team has risen. Who are these firebirds, you ask? Our new co-presidents, George LaFrazia and Antonella Mancini.

Pending their election on May 20, George and Antonella will take over the reins of the club. Audrey Perino will remain as treasurer, and Ken Kane will continue to edit *La Lettera Toscana*.

George, and his wife, Donna, are charter members of the Tuscan Association. A native of New York, George came to Portland in 1968. His grandparents and other relatives arrived in the U.S. in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, from Sant' Angelo a Cupolo in Campania, outside of Naples.

George has long been a fixture in the local Italian-American community. He's active in

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**IMPORTANT ITALIAN FILM SCREENING..... 2**



# CO-PRESIDENTS SHARE PROGRAMMING EXPERIENCES, BROAD ITALIAN CONNECTIONS

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the Sons of Italy, the Italian Benvenuto Club and is treasurer of the IBC Foundation. George has helped line up programs for the Tuscan Club, especially in recent years. In fact, it was he who suggested our guest speaker on May 20, Jacqueline Jannotta Rothenberg.

Chances are you're acquainted with George, but Antonella might be less familiar. She joined the OregonTuscans a couple of years ago, after a chance encounter with Audrey and Ken on a hike. When a Mancini and a Perino meet on the trail, you can bet the conversation will turn to Italy ... and in this case it eventually involved the Tuscan Association. Prophetically, Audrey asked her new acquaintance, "You wanna be president?" It was meant as a joke, but look how it's turned out!

Antonella was born in Italy and came to the U.S. at age 5, growing up on Long Island, New York. She feels extremely fortunate to have spent her junior year of college as an exchange student in Italy at the University of Rome, *La Sapienza*. In Rome, she was able to meet other Italian and foreign university students, get fluent in Italian, reconnect with family



in her home region of Molise, and rediscover her Italian roots. That year, she traveled the *length of the boot*, from Puglia and Calabria, all the way to Milano and Brescia, sometimes by hitchhiking.

She has lived in Portland for 10 years, moving here from Seattle. Antonella loves all the walking, hiking, and biking Portland offers. She likes to cook and bake at home. She belongs to two book clubs and loves to watch films and live theater.

In Seattle, she was a member of the Dante Alighieri Society, where she helped out on the committee to line up speakers for their Italian and English programs, and wrote articles for their newsletter.

As co-president of our club, she plans to use some of this past experience to arrange programs for the Tuscan Association of Oregon. She also hopes to network with the other Italian organizations in Portland in order to share information, resources and speakers. She intends to increase membership by attracting people of Italian heritage and lovers of Italian culture.

We owe Antonella and George our sincere thanks for seeing that the club will continue and prosper!

## ITALIAN FILM FOCUSES ON LIBYAN IMMIGRANT ISSUE, AT PORTLAND STATE ON MAY 17

Portland State's Department of World Languages and Literature is screening an important Italian docufilm on May 17. It's *L'ordine delle Cose* (*The Order of Things*), a 2017 movie by Andrea Segre about Italy's relationship with Libya, as seen through the eyes of Corrado, an Italian immigration officer. Segre says of his film, "In this era which seems to have metabolized injustice, the tension between Europe and immigration is calling into question the very identity of Europe. Corrado and his story recount this identity crisis. Through him, his discipline and his emotional tension, I have searched for these same aspects of our civilization and our time."

The film is being presented in conjunction with *Associazione Culturale Italiana di Portland*. Check out the [trailer](#). It will be shown at 4:00pm on Thursday, May 17 on the Portland State campus downtown in room 283 of Cramer Hall. The movie will be followed by a discussion.





# HAVING NO REGRETS TIPPED THE SCALE IN TERMS OF TAKING THE GENOA PLUNGE

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“regret” column, so I refused to let it wither into a “shoulda woulda coulda.” Basically, the thought of *not* doing it was more painful than all the effort [it took] to make it happen.

*The majority of people think of overseas vacations in terms of days or weeks. Why should they consider a longer exploration, like your 2013 odyssey, instead?*

I describe the typical vacation as “zoo travel.” You travel to a new place, meander, window shop, tour museums, read pamphlets, eat food, “ooh & ah,” and sleep in various settings during your time away. If you’re lucky, there’s some interaction with locals and/or you take part in a cultural activity. And, within a couple of weeks, you’re back to your familiar rhythm, save for some photos or videos to remind you “I did that.”

But when you leave the familiar for an extended time, the usual “lifeline” to home dissolves, which, in a way, leaves you more firmly planted wherever you are. Then it’s “Oh wow, I’m stuck here to figure things out.” Whatever happens, you’re not on a plane any time soon heading back to the life you’ve mastered.

Instead, you’re kind of like a baby mapping out a new reality (which is an enormous boost for your brain). Furthermore, an extended time somewhere lets you understand a place and its people more intimately. You have the time to build friendships. And in the process of getting to know the foreign “other” you come to learn who you are in a deeper way.

*You have returned to Italy several times since your year-long stay. What keeps you going back?*

Why do we keep going back to Italy? Is that a *serious* question? Because it’s *Italy*! A country so layered and varied it’s a world unto its own — where Sicily is as

different from Sardegna, as Venice is from Rome. After living there for a year, along with several trips before and after, we’ve barely scratched the surface of understanding *il bel paese*. And now that we have a handle on the language, returning to Italy whenever we can is an easy choice to make.

*Do you have a favorite spot in Italy? Is it Genoa, your homebase for a year, or is it somewhere else you’ve visited?*

Almost every church in Italy holds a relic of a saint. The left finger of a saint might be in Venice, while her foot might be in Rome, her head in Palermo, and so on. This can make for an interesting “scavenger hunt” when

traveling! But my “favorite” spot in Italy is spread out like the relics of a disembodied saint.

My favorite statue is in Naples (*The Veiled Christ*). My favorite granita is in Taormina, Sicily (at *Bam Bar*). My favorite city to get lost in is Venice. My favorite meal is in Parma (*La Greppia*). My favorite museum is in Bolzano (South Tyrol Museum of Archaeology). My favorite beach is on *La Maddalena* in Sardegna.

I could go on, so maybe it’s easier to say Genoa is my favorite place in Italy. The vertical city between the mountains and the sea never fails to allure. It’s an oyster that always

presents precious new treasures whenever we go.

*Would you and your husband do another year abroad in the future? Would your kids? If so, where would you go?*

My kids would say a resounding, “Yes!” (Though, I don’t know how much of that is an escape fantasy.) And yes, we would absolutely do it again. Taking a year abroad has us thinking about where we might go once our kids finish school. We are open to the idea of house swapping as a means to live in other spots for months at a time, both in the U.S. and abroad. I guess we’ll see what possibilities present themselves...

**Join Jacqueline May 20 for more in-depth discussion!**

