

Maggio 2019

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MAY 5: SANTA MARIA ROTONDA

One of our favorite guest speakers returns on **May 5, at 3:30pm**, in the community room at [215 Oswego Summit](#) in Mountain Park. Clark College art professor Lisa Staley will be back for her fourth lecture. But this time, she's branching out from painting and sculpture to talk about architecture.

"I was thinking that it might be interesting to talk about the ancient Roman Pantheon," said Prof. Staley. "I have not really talked about architecture yet [to your group], so it seems like something old, yet something new."



The Pantheon, known informally as *Santa Maria Rotonda* because of the large dome behind its columned, rectangular portico, is nearly two thousand years old. Amazingly, it has been in continuous use since its dedication in the Second Century A.D.

Originally a pagan temple, since the Seventh Century the Pantheon has served as the Church of St. Mary and the Martyrs. The "Father of the Fatherland," Victor Emmanuel II, the first king of a united Italy is buried there. So is his son King Umberto I and the painter Raphael.

"There are several reasons that the Pantheon is interesting. First, it is a great example of the Romans' use of the rounded arch," said Prof. Staley. "Then, it demonstrates the way that the form that architecture assumes relates to the function of it. Finally, it helps us understand a three-part metaphor for the magnificence of Rome. We may even build human architecture at the meeting!"

(see page 4 for photos of the Pantheon)

NEXT MTG:

SUNDAY, MAY 5, 3:30
215 OSWEGO SUMMIT

AFTER THAT:
SUNDAY, JUNE 23
SUMMER PICNIC!

THE PREZ SEZ...

BY GEORGE LAFRAZIA

(Editor's note: As *La Lettera Toscana* went to press, President George LaFrazia and Donna were happily cruising the seven seas – the lucky guys! Being surrounded by water ... and not by Tuscans nor the Internet ... he wasn't able to send along a column. However, in talking with George before he left, I knew what was on his mind for this space...



He wants you to save the date for our program-year-end picnic. We'll be gathering on Sunday, June 23. It'll take the form of past Tuscan summer picnics: we'll have a grill going; you bring a side dish, salad or dessert to fill out the buffet table.

The location is to be determined, but rumor has it that it may take place on the north side of the Columbia this time. Exact time and location will be announced via e-mail in June. For now, please circle the date on your calendar.

– Ken Kane)

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TRAVELS WITH STEVE IN NORTHEAST ITALY ... PART 3

STORY AND PHOTOS BY STEVE JOHNSON



MAGNIFICENT MOSAIC DOMES IN RAVENNA

(Last fall, Tuscan Association member Steve Johnson [right, enjoying a martini at Harry's Bar in Venice] spent five weeks in Italy. Steve has chronicled his travels in Sicily, Naples, Bologna and Abruzzo in previous issues of La Lettera Toscana. In his final installment, Steve takes us to far northeast Italy.)

I left Abruzzo behind and took a train to Ravenna to see the beautiful mosaics. Ravenna is a nice city on the Adriatic, just east of Bologna. The Mosaics were breathtaking, I cannot imagine the patience of the artists. I had a nice stay at my little apartment and enjoyed my visit. I'm not sure though that I will return since I have already enjoyed the mosaics.

On to the ancient city of Trieste at the top of the Adriatic. I found Trieste an interesting melding of many cultures. I can't count the numbers of rulers Trieste has lived under, but it is now firmly under Italian control. Many of the local workers live next door in Slovenia. I talked to several who recommended that I take my next trip to Slovenia since it is so much cheaper.



I enjoyed touring Trieste and learning about its history, but it started raining which "dampened" my enthusiasm somewhat. Although I had an enjoyable time, I don't think I will return.

My last stop was in Venice which as I have told you is my favorite place. Unfortunately, on this trip I arrived on a day with the highest tide since 1996. It was a disaster trying to get from the train station to my Air B&B. Most of the streets were flooded up to about knee level.

(see RECORD-HIGH, page 3)



VENICE, WITH PIAZZA SAN MARCO IN THE DISTANCE

RECORD-HIGH TIDES WERE A “FULL-FILLING” EXPERIENCE ONCE STEVE GOT TO VENICE

(continued from page 2)

I purchased rain boots (right), but the water was over the top of the boots!

The water buses were shut down due to the tide and winds so I had to hire a water taxi to take me close to my apartment. When the taxi got close to my place the driver had to put me over the side into the water so that I could wade to my destination. Luckily, I was traveling with only carry-on baggage, so I was able to hold my suitcase out of the water as I



struggled along. I was very happy when my apartment host met me and led me to his dry apartment!

By the next morning, the tide had receded, the rain had stopped, and I had three gloriously sunny days in Venice. I made my ritual stop at Harry's Bar and reacquainted myself with Marco the long-time bartender who makes the best martini!

Once again I got up early, took a water taxi to the airport, and 24 hours after I woke up, I was tucking myself into my own bed in Portland. I had a great time and, as you can see, I have many places to revisit.

WALK THE STREETS OF PORTLAND'S FORMER LITTLE ITALY ON MAY 11



Until 1958 – when I-405 was built – St. Lawrence Church (above) stood about where the pink tree is on the off-ramp to 4th Avenue today.



Six years ago, the Tuscan Association commissioned “Once Upon a Time in Lair Hill,” a slideshow of old South Portland, then and now. This was the former Little Italy and Jewish Quarter of a century ago, before being largely displaced in the name of “progress.”

On Saturday May 11, OregonTuscan Ken Kane will lead a four-mile interpretive hike through the old neighborhood. If you're a strong walker and would like to join him, contact Ken at 503.246.6462 or ken@woodbloom.com. (Note: you *must* RSVP to participate.)

L'ANGOLO ITALIANO

DI CARLO ILIO MANNOCCI

Come un viaggio in aereo anche la politica italiana ha la sua “turbolenza”. In Italia al momento la turbolenza aumenta dato che i leaders politici non vanno d'accordo, i pentastellati e i leghisti hanno si fatto un patto di governo ma le parole e i fatti non combaciano...Mi ricordo un vecchio proverbio che dice” Le parole son parole ma i fatti son fatti!” Cio’ detto auguriamoci che si superino le numerose crisi e crisette altrimenti il prossimo ottobre svolteremo una ennesima pagina e...voteremo di nuovo. Godiamoci la primavera, sorridiamo sperando in bene.

The Pantheon *Roma*



The *oculus* at the top of the Pantheon provides ventilation and lets in natural light ... and rain.

(photo by Steven Lek)

The inscription atop the portico reads:
“Marcus Agrippa, son of Lucius, made [this building] when consul for the third time.”
Agrippa was a famed Roman architect ... but he actually designed the *previous* temple on this site, which burned down in 112 A.D.

(top and bottom photos by Ken Kane)

