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Tuscan Association of Oregon

LA
LETTERA
TOSCANA

FEB. 16: AN ARCHITECT'S LIFE (ACTUALLY MAKE THAT TWO LIVES)

Our meeting on Sunday, Feb. 16 at 3:30pm takes place at our *old stomping grounds*: Carvlin Hall at St. Philip Neri Church, 2408 SE 16th Av. in Portland.

We're headed back to Carvlin for a special presentation by Anthony Belluschi, a Portland native, who's carved out an international career as an architect. He's also the son of the famed Mid-century Modern architect and Italian immigrant Pietro Belluschi.

Since returning to Portland in 2012, Tony has not only designed and consulted on a number of projects, but he has also renovated (and lives in) a house his father designed in 1948. He also is an expert on his father's career and consults on some of Pietro's original projects ... including St. Philip Neri Church.



PIETRO BELLUSCHI AND HIS SON, TONY, AROUND THE TIME PIETRO DESIGNED HIS REVOLUTIONARY EQUITABLE BUILDING (BACKGROUND) IN 1948 IN DOWNTOWN PORTLAND

Tony will present a slideshow encompassing both Belluschi's careers. And we'll have the chance to walk through St. Philip Neri with the son of the man who designed it back in 1949. It should be a fascinating afternoon, whether you're into buildings or not, because the Belluschi legacy is one of family, not just blueprints. *(Learn more about the Belluschi on page 5.)*

NEXT MTG.:

**SUNDAY, FEB. 16, 3:30
CARVLIN HALL**

**AFTER THAT:
APRIL 19**

THE PREZ SEZ...

BY GEORGE LAFRAZIA

Remember that the Feb. 16 meeting takes place at St. Phillip Neri Church. On April 19 we will be back at the Summit in Lake

Oswego. For the April meeting, Joe Cavalli will talk on Italian immigration in the early 1900's. It's a good topic for me since that is when all my immediate ancestors came to this country. We will see if I can match my memory with the facts Joe will relate to us.

A very important matter we must work through is the election of new officers. My two-year term is ending, Audrey (treasurer) and Ken (newsletter editor) have been serving longer than that, and we need help. These positions are not hard to do and do not take a lot of time. Audrey, Ken and I will always be available to do training and help out in the future. Please consider accepting a position to keep the Tuscan Association strong and active.



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FESTA ITALIANA TO RETURN, MOVE

For 27 years, Portland summers included a celebration of Italian culture, food and wine. *Festa Italiana* was a staple of downtown Portland in August. But last year the *Festa* was canceled because of a combination of rising rents, a dwindling treasury and organizer burnout.

However, hope for the *Festa* never died. A core group, led by *Festa* President Ed Ferrero, has stepped up to move the event forward. In fact, plans are underway to bring it back in a new month and location: June 26-28 at Oaks Park in southeast Portland.

It'll be a different *Festa* from years past: more local, more kid-friendly, and definitely less costly. What was once a \$200,000 annual budget has been dialed back to an initial outlay of \$10,000 this year, fund-raising for which is already underway.



“There’s excitement for *Festa*. It just has to be maintained,” says fund-raising chair Frank Cook. “Folks want to make sure that this is going to happen.”

Cook says this is the year to try new things and work out the bugs, in advance of what organizers hope will be a bigger event in 2021 to mark *Festa*’s 30th anniversary.

The organizers were fortunate to find in Oaks Park a new, less-costly venue which had a summer weekend available. Back in the late 1980’s Oaks Park hosted the forerunner of *Festa* for a couple of years, a gathering called the Italian Party. “So, in a way, we’re going back home,” says Cook.

Committees are forming to plan this year’s event. These groups include Budget/Fundraising, Sponsorships, Entertainment, Vendors (both non-food and food), Wine Garden, *Festa* Mass, Operations



(setup, sound, etc.), Advertising/Social Media, and Volunteers. Two more committees deal with *Festa*-related events at other times of the year: Columbus Day and a Spring Dance. “Filling those committees with volunteers is our top priority,” says Cook.

The revitalized *Festa* plans to include food booths, a wine and beer garden, Italian coffee, local bands and dancing, vintage Italian cars, entertainment for the kids, and free parking. Oaks Park’s rides will also be available at a discount through *Festa*.

But before any of that can happen, the organizers need to meet a \$10,000 fund-raising goal by the end of March. Cook says they’re well on their way to reaching the number, but plenty still needs to be raised. Since *Festa* is a 501(c)(3) organization, all donations are tax-deductible. To volunteer for a committee or make a donation, contact *Festa* treasurer Anna Salanti or Frank Cook at 503.077.2660. Find out more at <https://www.festa-italiana.org/> which will be updated as new information becomes available.

PLEASE PAY YOUR TUSCAN CLUB DUES!

Many of you have paid your dues for 2020 ... but there are a few procrastinators out there. Dues are \$25 for singles and \$35 for couples.

Treasurer Audrey Perino will gladly accept your dues at the Feb. 16 meeting. Or mail her a check made out to “Tuscan Association of Oregon.”

Please send it to:
37 SW Canby St.
Portland, OR
97219.



WHAT SAYS "ITALY" TO YOU? FAMILY IN MILAN!

BY ELEANOR VANBUREN

In December 2015, I traveled to Milan with my mother, Tuscan Association member Marybeth Fossati, to celebrate Christmas with my brother Sam, who was teaching English there. It was a magical time for the three of us: walking through the Christmas stalls and *illuminato* parks at night, exploring the *Navigli* canals, and touring *Teatro alla Scala*, complete with mid-afternoon *espresso* breaks. We searched the stores and bought *La Befana* dolls for the January celebration (*e molte panettone*).

The *Duomo di Milano* was the most spectacular sight of all. During the day we went up to the roof of the cathedral, walked the slanted marble roof and gazed upon the city. At night the cathedral and the large tree in the *piazza* came alive in lights. We attended a Christmas Day service at the cathedral, where most of the attendees were tourists since Italians would be at home with their families. That evening, we gathered in Sam's small apartment, and I made *risotto Milanese* and lentils with *cotechino* (which has become a family tradition) while listening to a live stream of All Classical Portland's "Christmas in Milan" program – *perchè no?*



FESTA DELLA BEFANA CONTINUES A GENERATIONS—OLD ITALIAN TRADITION

The annual collaboration among the Tuscan Association, *Amici d'Italia* and the Sons and Daughters of Italy on Jan. 5 made for a fun afternoon for youngsters of Italian heritage. The old woman with the broom made her appearance, bringing gifts for the kids as she continued her centuries-long search for the Christ child. The goodies and Bob the Magician also helped to make the day fun. Thanks to all who came!



Befana photos courtesy of Maria Nacoste



La Lettera Toscana is edited by Ken Kane,
for the Tuscan Association of Oregon.

If you have feedback or submissions, please e-mail
them to: ken@woodbloom.com or send them to
37 SW Canby St., Portland, OR 97219.

THE MIC IS PASSED AT THE ITALIAN HOUR ON KBOO RADIO

On Jan. 5 a long and winding road came to an end. After a cheerful “*Buon giorno a tutti a buono domenica*” and a record or two, Lucia Galizia got to the point.

“I have news for all of you,” she told her radio audience. “I have been doing *The Italian Hour* for 33 years. Eleven years with a different station and the last 22 years with KBOO. Well, I think it’s time for me to retire.”

There were a few more tunes, a handful of Italian community announcements, and some final thank-yous (including to her husband “for help with my English”). But come 10:00am, the long-time host was history.

“It’s one less thing I’ll have to worry about,” says the woman who first sat behind *The Italian Hour* mic in the days before Panera Bread, Prozac, Bombay Sapphire Gin and The Simpsons. “I want to travel more, enjoy my family more and spend more time with my grandkids.”

When asked what she’ll do on future Sunday mornings, she laughs and says, “Go to church. Come home and have breakfast, and then cook. It’ll be my day of rest.” She plans to continue to lead her first-Thursday-of-the-month Italian Conversation Group. The next one takes place on March 5 at 2:00pm at Costello’s Travel Caffe, 2222 NE Broadway in Portland.

The show – which has aired for over a half-century in Portland – must go on, even without Galizia. She’s left it in the good hands and voice of Andrea Scasso, her collaborator and occasional substitute host for the past decade. He doesn’t expect any on-air surprises now that he’s taken over the reins, but says “it will definitely be a challenge to establish all the connections Lucia had with the community.”

Galizia and Scasso come from different generations, so it shouldn’t be surprising if their musical tastes don’t always match. “I play more traditional Italian music, while Andrea plays more contemporary music,” says the former host. “I hope he’ll include some of the



old-fashioned music for the seniors who are listening.”

Scasso expects to do some retrospectives along with his playlist of tunes from today. “I’m going to reach out to all the Italian Community to understand what people enjoy, regardless of age,” he says. “I would like to have ‘guest DJs’ from the entire Italian-American community. They would help pick the songs for the show and talk about their organization.”

So, whether you’re young or ... less young, *The Italian Hour* should continue to provide you with your fortnightly fix of music from the old country. In fact, just moments into

his new role as permanent host on Jan. 19, Scasso offered a tip of the *berretto* to his predecessor:

“The next song, I want to dedicate. It’s a song from Naples, so of course, this one is for Lucia.” She may be gone from 90.7FM, but obviously she’s far from forgotten.

L'ANGOLO ITALIANO

DI CARLO ILIO MANNOCCI

Non e' facile analizzare la situazione italiana di questo periodo. Vi sono in realta' troppi e diversi schemi politici con tanti problemi affrontati (sulla carta) ma mai risolti. A me sembra che il lasciare opere "incompiute" sa diventata una moda in Italia. Si inizia quasi sempre di scatto per poi rimanere senza fiato abbandonando la gara.

E non sto' a stillare un elenco completo, voglio menzionare solo il problema Alitalia ancora irrisolto con un continuo rimandare e con miliardi di perdite, l' ILVA di Taranto che al; momento barcolla, il caso Autostrade/Benetton dove il governo si trova ad affrontare una lunga vicenda giudiziaria con probabili risarcimenti astronomici, la riforma della giustizia, eccetera, eccetera.. Come si dice in Italia: "Che Iddio ce la mandi buona!!"

A tutti un saluto e un ricordo... Carlo

LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON: FOR THE BELLUSCHIS, NEARLY A CENTURY OF ARCHITECTURAL MEMORIES

Editor's note: Recently Tony Belluschi (our guest speaker on Feb. 16) answered some questions posed by La Lettera Toscana editor Ken Kane...

You were born in 1941 and lived in Portland until age 10. What do you recall of those days?



After I was born, we lived on Council Crest in a new house my father designed in 1937. Then we moved to Aloha, where my father remodeled an old farmhouse and my family lived there from 1944-48. I remember that house well and have been there many times since. I loved the country as it was then, very rural. We then moved to Dunthorpe. I recall going to Riverdale School as a youngster for only two years because we then moved to Cambridge,

Mass., in early 1951 when my father became the Dean of Architecture and Planning at MIT.



We loved Portland and the Northwest and I was never particularly enamored with the East Coast with the humid summers and long, cold, hard winters. I missed the connection to the

land, the rivers and especially the mountains of Oregon.

What would you consider to be some of the high points of your father's career?

I think my father's best design work was done when he was in Oregon: the Portland Art Museum, the Equitable Building (now Commonwealth), many churches like St. Thomas More Catholic

Church, Zion Lutheran, St. Philip Neri, First Presbyterian in Cottage Grove, and later the University of Portland Chapel, to name just a few. He did 42 houses of worship throughout his career. They were his favorite type of design problem to solve.

I should also mention a

few other projects that were among his best that were not in Oregon: New York City's Julliard School of Music, Portsmouth (RI) Abbey Chapel and school campus, and St. Mary's Cathedral in San Francisco which is celebrating its fiftieth anniversary this year.



After graduating from the Rhode Island School of Design with an architecture

degree in 1966, you initially worked with your father on some projects in Boston, but decided to move west and break out on your own. As a young architect embarking on a career, was it more of a help or a hindrance to be the son of someone so renowned in the field?

It was both a help and a hindrance. I was always allowed in the door because of my last name and was able to get a good job because of that. But, I also had to work much harder than anyone else to prove myself – not only to my fellow associates but also to myself – and I knew my father was aware of my progress.

My father initially told me NOT to be an architect but I think he just wanted to be sure that I was [sure of] my own convictions.

Eventually, I decided to move to the West Coast. [But] I could never have worked in Portland as a young architect. Even today, all these years after leaving as a 10-year-old, and now being back for about ten years, I still find it an issue being “the son of Pietro.”

(see **TONY**, page 6)

TONY BELLUSCHI HEADED WEST TO DESIGN A GLOBAL LIFE OF HIS OWN

(continued from page 5)

I purposely chose Los Angeles first and that firm took me to Chicago where the only ones who knew the name Belluschi, were a few architects who knew Pietro when they were students at MIT when he was the Dean.

My practice has been very different [from my father's] and for logical reasons. I began to have many new overseas clients after winning several International design competitions. These were in Paris, Istanbul and Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, where I could fly to directly, which was a big advantage of living in Chicago.

What do you consider your career highlights?

My favorite project was located near Denver with a wonderful repeat client from California who asked me to design a very large scale project called *Park Meadows Retail Resort*.

This got our firm great recognition overseas as these clients were interested in that kind of project. These overseas projects all won various design awards. They were office, retail and mixed use projects. My favorites were the Paris project, called *Le Quatre Temps*, which was a very large commercial project and *Metrocity*, in Istanbul, an office, retail and residential project.

You returned to Portland in 2012, why?

Twenty years ago, I was approached by a large firm from Chicago to join them in a merger/acquisition. Then three years later I decided to leave the firm and went back into practice as a sole practitioner. I still work out of my home office and studio, first in Chicago



PARK MEADOWS, COLORADO
TONY, 1996

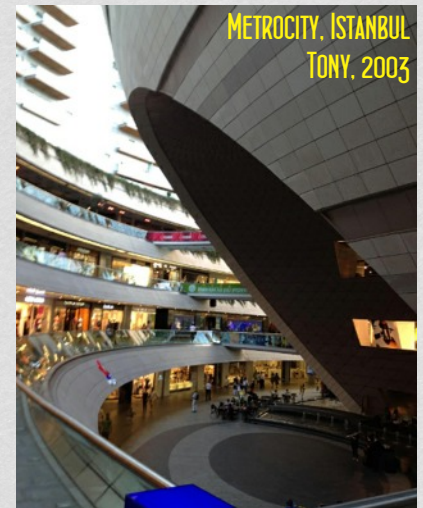
and now in Portland. Marti and I decided to move back to Portland because the family house became available after both of my parents passed away.

One option was for us to sell it but when one of the

realtors said to me that it might be a possible “tear-down.” I said “absolutely no way.” We then began almost a four-year process to restore, renovate and create additions to the house. This process was done in several stages.

When you restored that house almost a decade ago, could you “hear” the voice of your father in the rafters offering suggestions ... or admonitions?

I could hear my father’s voice throughout the entire process encouraging me and giving me advice whenever I needed it.



METROCITY, ISTANBUL
TONY, 2003



LE QUATRE TEMPS, PARIS
TONY, 1981

A standard was “Would Pietro and Marge approve?” It really became a labor of love with a great deal of satisfaction when it was completed. It is a wonderful home and we have invited almost every design group in Portland to visit or tour the house and property. I’d say probably 5,000 people have been through the house to date.