



# La Rondine

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ITALIAN CLUB OF ST. LOUIS

Sep 2003

## "Doge Enrico Dandolo and the Myth of Venice"

by Prof. Tom Madden

### Next Meeting

Wednesday

November 19th

Cocktails– 6:30p.m.

Dinner– 7:00p.m.

RSVP–  
Dan Viele

(636) 537-5960  
or

ItalianClubSTL  
@aol.com

Even today one occasionally hears of Venice referred to as *La Serenissima*; but the Most Serene Republic's long history has been far from peaceful (actually, the title was bestowed by a pope during one of the rare periods when Venice and the papacy were not slugging it out with each other). An interesting aspect of the Middle Ages was that whenever life started to get boring at home the leaders of the West would call for a Crusade against the Moslems who controlled the Holy Land. In all there were four. The

Venetians sat out the first three but joined the fourth - thereby making a great deal of money.

In our November program, speaker Tom Madden will look at the life of Enrico Dandolo the most famous of Venetian Doges. Elected to the throne of St. Mark in 1192 despite being blind and more than 80 years old, Dandolo is most often remembered (and blamed) for leading the Fourth Crusade against Constantinople, the greatest and probably richest Christian city in the world. In his presentation, Madden

will re-examine Dandolo's image, demonstrating that much of what is said about him today is drawn from baroque stereotypes of the Venetian Republic, having nothing at all to do with the medieval man. Professor Thomas Madden is Chair of the Department of History at Saint Louis University. His recent books include *The Fourth Crusade: The Conquest of Constantinople* (1997); *A Concise History of the Crusades* (1999); and *Enrico Dandolo and the Rise of Venice* (2003). *by Gene Mariani*

## "Le Canzoni degli Alpini" by Gene Mariani & Chorus

Soldiers of all nations have particular marching songs and the Songs of the Alpine soldiers are by far the most famous in Italy. A poignant prayer "Lord of the Skies", written to honor the Alpini Troupes killed in battle, was said before the meal.

The history of this Alpine Corps goes back to 1872 when it were created to meet the unique needs of military operations in the rugged mountains of northern Italy. These mountain men first fought in the 1896 battle of Adua, in Ethiopia. They distinguished themselves in both World Wars and after the September 8, 1943 armistice; the Alpini units assisted the Garibaldi Partisans in various battles to liberate the mountains of northern Italy. They

still exist today and can be recognized by the unusual cone-shaped hat with large, black feathers introduced in 1907 and worn to this day. Gianpiero Della Croce, a veteran of an Alpini unit brought his hat that evening for everyone to view.

Singing the songs of the Alpine soldiers were members of the St. Ambrose Church Choir, many of whom were also Italian Club members: Leader- Aldo Della Croce, Daniela Della Croce, Sue Della Croce Trese, Marie Cuccia-Brand, Gianpiero Della Croce, Armando Pasetti and Richard Brand.

They sang six songs: "Sul Cappello"- dedicated to their famous hat. "Quel Mazzolin di Fiore" – about a young girl wanting to present a bouquet

of mountain flowers to her sweetheart about to visit her. "O, Dio Del Cielo" – a soldier telling the Lord if he was a bird he would fly off to meet his love instead of going off to war. "Addio Mia Bella, Addio" – A soldier bids farewell to his love as he goes off to war, leaving her with a son, a child of love. "La Campana Di San Giusto" – Italian soldiers in the closing days of World War I invade and liberate the city of Trieste. The girls and the bells of the Church joyously greet them. "La Bandiera Tricolore" – a song in honor of the Italian flag and its three colors.

This particular program was the concept of Peter Puleo who was unable to attend the October 15 meeting.

*by Marianne Peri Sack*

**"The history of this Alpine Corps goes back to 1872 when it were created to meet the unique needs of military operations in the rugged mountains of northern Italy."**

## L'Angolo Del Presidente *by James Tognoni*

### *My dear fellow members:*

By the time you receive this edition of our newsletter the beginning of the holiday season will be fast upon us. I for one can't wait for all the fine meals and togetherness the holidays bring. There is quite a bit of business to discuss in this month's column.

I will admit to a major oversight. In October we were to have had an election. One of our Board members will be rotating off the Board. Which means that position will have to be filled by the re-election of that person or a nomination and election of a new director. If you have a desire to serve or wish to nomi-

nate someone that you believe would make a great representative to the Board, please let me know via a phone call or email.

Other items for your consideration and things to look for:

- This month we will be presenting the Gene Mariani award to two deserving St Louis University students.
- We have several membership applications for approval at this month's meeting.
- Watch for information regarding the first annual Presepi tour of the Hill.

This will be done in cooperation with the Hill Business Association.

- The film series is rolling on and has been very successful. Planning is underway for the spring series.
- Save the date for the annual Christmas / holiday celebration. Details will follow. The event will be held at Baldo's on our usual meeting night, December 17<sup>th</sup>.

I look forward to seeing you at this month's meeting.

*Ciao, Jim*

[jtognoni@earthlink.net](mailto:jtognoni@earthlink.net)

## First Annual Hill Nativity Walk

### Happy 50th Anniversary!

**Congratulations to George and Marie Wehrle who will be celebrating their 50th Anniversary on November 14th.**

**Birthday wishes to George on November 13th.**

The Italian Club of St. Louis is pleased to announce the first annual Nativity Walk. The Nativity Walk, which is co-sponsored by the Hill Business Association, consists of an Italian-style nativity set competition and displays in the windows of Hill businesses from December 1, 2003 to January 4, 2004. The purpose of the show is to display Italian culture, which is rich in beautiful and detailed "presepi" or nativity sets, and to reemphasize the true meaning of Christmas.

The competition, which is open to all, has three categories: children, individuals, and organizations. Prizes will be awarded for best of show in each category. Nativity sets must be entered by November 28.

For further information contact Barbara Klein at (314) 422-3102 or Marie Cuccia-Brand (314) 993-2252.

### ITALIAN FILMS AT ST. LOUIS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

*The 12th annual St. Louis International Film Festival will be held from November 13-23 and includes three Italian films. For further information, go to [www.cinemastlouis.org](http://www.cinemastlouis.org)*

#### **The Embalmer (L'Imbalsamatore)**

Directed by Matteo Garrone, Italy, 2002, 101 min.  
Sat. Nov. 22, 9:15 p.m., Sun. Nov. 23, 1 p.m., Hi-Pointe

#### **My Mother's Smile (L'Ora di religione)**

Directed by Marco Bellochio, Italy, 2002, 103 min.  
Sat. Nov 22, 7 p.m., Sun. Nov 23, 6:15 p.m., Webster University

#### **The Invisible Collection (La collezione invisibile)**

Directed by Gianfranco Isernia, Italy, 2000, 95 min.  
Sat. Nov 22, 9:30 p.m., Sun. Nov 23, 8:30 p.m., Webster University

#### **My Mother's Smile (L'Ora di religione)**

Directed by Marco Bellochio, Italy, 2002, 103 min.  
Sat. Nov 22, 7 p.m., Sun. Nov 23, 6:15 p.m., Webster University

### SIGNORE DELLE CIME

*(prayer recited by Salvatore Sutera at the October Italian Club Dinner Meeting)*

Dio del cielo, Signore delle cime  
Un nostro amico hai chiesto alla montagna  
Ma ti preghiamo su nel Paradiso  
Lascialo andare per le Tue montagne.

Santa Maria, Signora delle neve  
Copri col bianco soffice mantello  
Il nostro amico, il nostro fratello.  
Su nel Paradiso lasciarlo andare  
Per le Tue montagne

### LORD OF THE SKIES

God of Heaven, Lord of the peaks  
You have called our friend from the mountains.  
But we pray you above in Paradise  
To let him go among your mountains.

Holy Mary, our lady of the snows  
Cover him with your soft mantle of white  
Our friend, our brother.  
In Paradise, let him go among your mountains.

# TERZA PAGINA

## I capolavori della poesia italiana

a cura di Barbara Klein

**Giacomino Pugliese**, nato in Puglia, fu grande rimatore della Scuola Siciliana che fu attivo forse verso la metà del Duecento. Restano di lui sette tra canzoni e canzonette e un discordo. Le prime dieci strofe del suo capolavoro, un lamento per la morte della donna amata, sono qui presentate:

### Morte, perché m'hai fatta sì gran guerra di Giacomino Pugliese

Morte, perché m'hai fatta sì gran guerra,  
che m'hai tolta madonna, ond'io mi doglio?  
La fior de le bellezze mort'hai in terra,  
per che lo mondo non amo né voglio.  
Villana Morte, che non ha' pietanza,  
disparti amore e togli l'allegrezza  
e dà cordoglio,  
la mia alegranza post'hai in gran tristanza,  
ché m'hai tolto la gioia e l'alegranza  
ch'avere soglio.

## In giro per l'Italia

a cura di Barbara Klein

### Alberobello



A 55 chilometri a sud-est di Bari sorge Alberobello, la capitale mondiale dei trulli. I 'trulli' si allineano in un agglomerato urbano, suddiviso in due rioni: Monti e Aia Piccola, che accoglieva fino al 1800 tutta la popolazione locale. Questi rioni sono Monumenti nazionali e dal dicembre 1996 sono stati riconosciuti dall'U.N.E.S.C.O. Patrimonio Mondiale dell'Umanità.

Il paesaggio agrario è caratterizzato da una folta vegetazione di mandorli e ulivi che prospera su un terreno carsico. È dalle rocce calcaree stratificate che, sin dalla nascita di Alberobello è stato tratto il materiale per la costruzione, utilizzato per la copertura dei trulli.

La storia di questa singolare cittadina risale alla seconda metà del XV secolo, quando, piccolo feudo sotto il dominio degli Acquaviva, Conti di Conversano, cominciò a popolarsi di contadini che resero la 'Selva' (così denominata) fertile. Ma quando l'editto 'Prammatica de Baronibus' impose l'autorizzazione regia su ogni costruzione, il conte di Conversano, impose ai sudditi l'impiego di pietre a secco con assoluto divieto dell'utilizzo della malta. Così in caso di ispezioni governative, i trulli potevano essere smontati e rimontati in poche ore.

Correva l'anno 1797 e un gruppo di coraggiosi alberobellesi, stanco della precaria condizione, si recò a Taranto per chiedere aiuto al re Ferdinando IV di Borbone. Il Re inviò il Decreto con il quale il piccolo villaggio divenne libero.

Il trullo è interamente costruito in pietra, non sono usate né malta né legname, né altri mezzi di sostegno o di collegamento. I metodi di costruzione, una tradizione millenaria, sono assise di pietra sovrapposte a secco secondo una pianta solitamente quadrata e in alto disposte in cerchi sempre più stretti a formare la volta; pareti esterne intonacate e imbiancate in vivo contrasto con le nere 'chiancarelle' che rivestono il tetto conico; lindo e altrettanto candido interno con nicchie ed alcove ricavate nello spessore dei muri.

La copertura del trullo si conclude con il pinnacolo. È generalmente formata da tre pietre sopraposte: una di forma cilindrica, una a forma scodella o di piatto, ed una sfera. Il suo vero significato è tuttora oscuro. Di sicuro è che i suddetti simboli si ergono dalla cima di tutti i trulli, di varie dimensioni e non solo su quelli di Alberobello ma anche su tutti quelli esistenti sul territorio pugliese. Alcuni pinnacoli:



I misteriosi segni dipinti sul frontale del cono dei trulli sono simboli magici e propiziatori, alcuni di origine pagana, altri cristiani. A molti di questi simboli disegnati a calce sulle 'chianche' si possono attribuire vari significati, i più comuni sono: protezione della famiglia dal malocchio, venerazione di qualche divinità propiziatoria di un buon raccolto. Detti simboli sono in grande parte scomparsi, col passare del tempo hanno perso il loro significato e valore, e gli abitanti dei trulli non hanno tenuto viva questa usanza dei loro antenati. Alcuni simboli:



Core trafitto  
di Maria.



Simbolo del  
Sole-Cristo.

Attualmente, nella 'zona monumentale', sono presenti all'incirca 1100 trulli. Ma il 'Trullo Sovrano', capo e gigante dei trulli della vallata, alto 15 metri, è l'unico ad avere due piani.

Alberobello è un meraviglioso centro urbano, unico al mondo, che oggi molti vanno ad ammirare. Per ulteriori informazioni vedi <http://www.tuttoalberobello.it>

**Buon viaggio in Italia!!!**

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ITALIAN CLUB OF ST. LOUIS  
LA RONDINE**

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## **Prossime Manifestazioni**

### **FUTURE ITALIAN CLUB MEETINGS**

**November 19- *"Doge Dandolo of Venice"***

Prof. Tom Madden  
Award to St. Louis  
University student(s)

**December 17- *Christmas celebration and "Italian Folk Tales,"***

dramatized by the  
Panettone Players

**January 2004- *There will not be a meeting of the Italian Club in January.***

*The Italian Club meets the  
third Wednesday  
of each month for dinner at  
da Baldo's Restaurant  
Cocktails—6:30p.m.  
Dinner- 7:00p.m.*

### **ITALIAN CLUB'S FALL FILM & OPERA SERIES**

Turandot

Friday, November 7

Hear Placido Domingo sing "Nessun Dorma" in Giacomo Puccini's glorious and last opera. Zeffirelli directs this monumental Met. Opera production. If the royal suitors of the cold Chinese princess Turandot do not solve her riddles, they are executed. But against her will, "love wins out in the end." (134 minutes).

Films will be introduced by Dr. Carla Bossola, and operas by Dorotea Rossomanno-Phillips. All programs are in Italian with English sub-titles and begin promptly at 7:30 p.m. Admission is free. Sponsored by the Italian Club of St. Louis and the St. Louis Bocce Club. The St. Louis Bocce Club is located at 2210 Marconi Avenue, on the "hill," St. Louis, Mo. 63110. For further information contact Dorotea Rossomanno-Phillips at 535-9748 or e-mail: dorotearp@aol.com.

### **The Italian Club and the St. Louis Art Museum...**

**will co-sponsor a series of films by Luchino Visconti at the St. Louis Art Museum 's Auditorium.**

**The films will be shown on Fridays  
January 9th, 16th and 23rd.**

**The movie titles and times will be posted in the next edition of the LaRondine.**