



La Rondine

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ITALIAN CLUB OF ST. LOUIS

August 2004

A Tale of Two Cities

"I Sassi di Matera e i Trulli di Alberobello" by Pete Puleo

Next Meeting

Wednesday

August 18

Cocktails— 6:30p.m.

Dinner— 7:00p.m.
\$20 per person

RSVP—Dan Viele

(636) 537-5960 or

ItalianClubSTL@aol.com

This month's program will be presented by the Italian Club's own Peter Puleo, well known member, former Director, and currently the co-chair of the Program Committee. He is a chemical engineering graduate of Washington University and a successful entrepreneur. He and his wife have traveled the world widely. Let Pete, in his unique entertaining style, take you on a trip to visit two extraordinary places in southeastern Italy. Matera and Alberobello are both on the list of UNESCO International World Heritage Sites. There's nothing like them anywhere. There's nothing like Mr. Puleo anywhere, either.

Matera, in the Basilicata re-

gion, in the arch of the Italian boot, is considered the oldest continually inhabited cave community in the world, dating from the Neolithic era to the twentieth century. Neolithic – that's 10,000 years B.C.! At the end of the first millennium, the Benedictine and Basilian monks who were fleeing from the persecution of generations of foreign "infidels" arrived in Matera. These monks literally "dug in" too, excavating individual cells, tiny chapels and even some spacious churches in the hills, valleys and ravines around Matera. Eventually, it seems as though everyone in this region moved into caves, which came to be known as *i sassi* (stones). Today, you can visit

155 of these astounding structures.

Alberobello is in Puglia, a region contiguous to and east of Basilicata, in the heel of the boot. Alberobello is not an ancient town, although its origin is cloaked in folk myth. Its citizens live in "trulli", which are circular stone houses with conical stone roofs emblazoned with mysterious markings. The stones come from the land on which the houses have been built. Legend has it the trulli were first built without mortar so that they could quickly be disassembled and the inhabitants hidden in the woods to avoid the advancing tax collector. A myth? Come join us and find out!

by Roy DeBellis

Italian Buffet Dinner and film - "Ciao Professore"

"Ciao Professore" is sweet tempered and ultimately uplifting, and more than balanced by the immense warmth, generosity, and spirit of the Neapolitans themselves. "

At our July 21st Italian Club meeting we enjoyed a gourmet buffet prepared by Baldo and Madda Gandolfo. From delicious arancini, stuffed mushrooms, spinach stuffed melanzane, toasted ravioli, and meatballs to Madda's luscious cream cake for dessert. The buffet was delicious! Many of the members indicated that they would like to have a buffet at least twice a year.

After the dinner, we gathered to watch the film, "Ciao Professore". Dorotea Rossmanno-Phillips gave a brief introduction of the film. Here are segments of her well-researched introduction: "Marco Sperelli, a gentile dedicated school teacher from Northern Italy, has been mistakenly assigned to a school in the south. There he experiences unexpected problems and frustrations, but also great rewards, with his undisciplined young students, products of gritty, troubled lives.

Sperelli's understanding of the children grows, and he gradually develops a bond with them. He even ends up using their street smarts in a moment of crises in which he helps his most belligerent, hood-like student, Rafaele, under trying circumstances, to find emergency medical care for his mother..

Although the film deals with decaying and depressing aspects of life in Corzano, a ghetto suburban area of Naples – in real life called Arzano., "Ciao Professore" is sweet tempered and ultimately uplifting, and more than balanced by the immense warmth, generosity, and spirit of the Neapolitans themselves.

Though there is fine acting all round, and Paolo Villagio, is superb as the school teacher, the young students steal the show. They are played by non professionals, gleaned from the school unforced style, each

(Continued on page 2)

L'Angolo Del Presidente *by James Tognoni*

Dear Fellow Members:

Our organization continues to grow and flourish. We are adding new members every month and hope to continue to attract more. We have something special in our Club. We have fantastic members, exceptional programs and a level of class that can't be beat. It's important to keep the Club fresh and of interest to all that wish to or are able to attend. We always welcome ideas for new and exciting programs. An example was the July meeting. As you know, we were treated to a fantastic buffet with many delightful and wonderful things to eat. Hats off to Baldo and Madda

for an incredible spread of culinary delights. After the meal, we sat as a group and watched the movie "Ciao Professore". It was a very nice and relaxed evening. According to the surveys taken, the majority of those in attendance liked the idea and would like to see us do that format at least twice a year. We had approximately 50 people in attendance, which I believe is a record for a July meeting.

This October we will have elections. A Nominating Committee is being formed to come up with a slate of candidates for all positions. If you are interested in running, please let

me know and I will bring your name forward. The work is very gratifying. I would also like to remind you that our monthly dinners are now \$20.00/person. We are grateful to Baldo for such outstanding dinners at a moderate price.

I will close now and leave you with wishes and prayers for the health and happiness for you and yours. I look forward to seeing you at our meeting on August 18th where we will have our own, Pete Puleo, as our speaker.

Ciao,

Jim

jtognoni@earthlink.net

Italian Buffet Dinner and film- "Ciao Professore", cont'd

(Continued from page 1)

captures the essence of the character. Though the students are unruly and pour out hilarious, shocking obscenities, we nevertheless are totally charmed by them. The story and dialogue of "Ciao Professore" are based on a book of essays of real events written by grade 3 students of the DeAmicis School in Arzano in the 1980's. Although the entire film has a number of engaging and extraordinary scenes, It involves a keen poignant mo-

ment when, at the train station, the young tough Raffaele, bids farewell to Sperelli, who has been transferred to a school in northern Italy. The last spoken line of the film, in Raffaele's voice, simply reflects the celebration of the human spirit in the face of overwhelming obstacles, and is the actual title of the film as shown in Italy, "Io, speriamo che me la cavo," "Me, let's hope that I make it."

by Marie Cuccia-Brand

President Tognoni Appoints Nominating Committee for October Elections

Jim Tognoni has asked Pete Puleo to chair the Nominating Committee. Serving on the Committee with Puleo will be President Emeritus, Gene Mariani, and Members: Maria Luhn, Debbie Monolo, Dante Marconi, and Valerio Bianco. If you are interested in being an officer or member of the Italian Club Board of Directors, please contact one of the members of the Nominating Committee or Jim Tognoni.

Concert and Dinner with James Goettsche—Official Papal Organist

Organ music with virtuoso, James Goettsche, on Sunday, September 19, at 2:30p.m. at the Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis. Following the concert, you will have the opportunity to meet Mr. Goettsche at Favazza's Rose of the Hill Banquet Center while enjoying a wonderful Italian Family Style Dinner. *General Concert Seating: \$10; Special Reserved Seating and Dinner: \$45. For tickets and reservations call (314) 533-7662. www.stlcathedralconcerts.org*

FIAO ITALIAN LANGUAGE PROGRAM—FALL 2004

The Italian Language Program will begin its fall term the week of September 13th. Adult classes will be held on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday evenings at the Missouri Botanical Garden's Commerce Bank Education Center located at Shaw Avenue and Kingshighway Blvd. The 10-week program is \$65 for Levels I-VI and \$85 for the conversational course. Children's classes will be held on Saturday mornings and begin on Saturday, September 18. The 10-week program for children is \$30 per course.

You are invited to attend an Open House Reception on Monday, August 30 from 6:30-8:00p.m. at the Missouri Botanical Garden Commerce Bank Education Center (corner of Shaw Ave & Kingshighway Blvd.). At this session, you may register for courses, pay tuition fees, meet teachers, assess proficiency levels and order books.

Visit their website: www.fiao-stl.org

TERZA PAGINA

I capolavori della poesia italiana

a cura di Barbara Klein

Giacomo Zanella (Chiampo, Vicenza 1820 - Cavazzale, Vicenza 1888) Sacerdote, traduttore di classici, poeta volto a riannodare l'antico con il moderno ma attento alle nuove istanze romantiche. Fra le opere: *Versi, Poesie, Astichello, Versioni poetiche*.

Temporale estivo

di Giacomo Zanella

Il suo stridor sospeso ha la cicala:
la rondinella con obliquo volo
terra terra sen va; sul fumaiolo
bianca colomba si pulisce l'ala.

Grossa, sonante qualche goccia cala,
che di pinte anitre allegro stuolo
evita con clamor; lieve dal suolo
di spenta polve una fragranza esala.

Scroscia la pioggia e contro il sol riluce,
come fili d'argento: il ruscel suona
che la villa circonda e par torrente,

sulle cui ripe a salti si conduce
lo scalzo fanciulletto ed abbandona
le sue flotte di carta alla corrente.

In giro per l'Italia

a cura di Barbara Klein

Vicenza, "la città di Palladio"

Innumerevoli e di enorme valore artistico sono le opere del sommo architetto Andrea di Pietro della Gondola detto il Palladio, universalmente riconosciuto come uno dei più alti talenti mai espressi nella storia dell'Umanità. A giusta conferma di ciò, valga da solo il prestigioso riconoscimento ottenuto da Vicenza, Città del Palladio che, nel dicembre del 1994, è stata inserita nella Lista del Patrimonio Mondiale dell'Unesco in considerazione del fatto che i beni architettonici palladiani, considerati d'interesse e di valore universale, hanno esercitato una grande influenza sulla cultura mondiale. Alcuni delle sue opere sono:



La **Loggia del Palazzo della Ragione**, progettata nel 1546-49, quando Palladio aveva appena trentotto anni, ed era allora decisamente poco conosciuto. Il restauro consiste in una loggia a due piani che avvolge il vecchio edificio tutt'intorno e che fonda

il suo leit motiv sulla ripetizione della serliana, (apertura a tre luci di cui le laterali, più piccole, sono architravate e quella centrale, più ampia, ad arco a tutto sesto). Con una certa enfasi retorica Palladio definisce "basilica" il Palazzo della Ragione circondato dalle nuove logge, in omaggio alle strutture della Roma antica dove si

discuteva di politica e si trattavano affari. È l'unica opera di **Palladio** realizzata interamente in pietra, ragione per cui la sua costruzione si è protratta per quasi settant'anni fino al 1617 quando la struttura fu terminata.



La **Villa Almerico Capra** detta "La Rotonda", situata in una posizione leggermente collinare, appena fuori dal centro urbano di Vicenza, all'inizio della Riviera Berica, la strada che conduce verso la

parte meridionale della provincia. La più celebre tra le ville del Palladio, simbolo stesso della sua architettura, fu iniziata attorno al 1570 per Paolo Almerico, un prelato papale, che commissionò l'opera nel 1566 di ritorno a Vicenza dopo un lungo soggiorno a Roma. I lavori di costruzione vennero portati avanti, dopo la morte di Palladio, con alcune modifiche, da **Vincenzo Scamozzi**, verso il 1591 e si conclusero solo nel 1620, con la decorazione interna ad affresco, opera di Alessandro Maganza e di Louis Dorigny, e le sculture di Lorenzo Rubini. L'originale struttura consta di un corpo centrale, coperto da una cupola detta "la ritonda", che si allunga, in ciascuno dei quattro lati, in un pronao. La parte centrale, uno dei motivi palladiani più famosi ed imitati, fu a sua volta ispirata al Pantheon dell'antica Roma. Le proporzioni perfette, i dettagli calibrati, la pianta simmetrica, le colonne tornite dal soffio di greca provenienza, tutto contribuisce a fare della Rotonda un'opera di straordinaria bellezza.

Il **Teatro Olimpico di Vicenza**, oggi il più antico teatro coperto esistente al mondo. L'Accademia Olimpica, costituita nel 1555, con le funzioni culturali comuni a tutte le accademie sorte in Italia nel '500, volle un teatro



per le rappresentazioni classiche. Il progetto della costruzione, proposto da **Palladio**, venne accettato e messo in opera solo pochi mesi prima della morte dell'architetto e venne condotto a termine dal suo successore **Vincenzo Scamozzi**. Questi ha inserite le scenografie allestite per la rappresentazione inaugurale del 1585, le Sette vie di Tebe, destinate a diventare parte integrante dell'edificio, una scena architettonica fissa che rappresenta tre vie della antica città di Tebe, sebbene queste tre prospettive architettoniche somiglino molto più a strade rinascimentali, se non addirittura vicentine, che a quelle di una polis greca. Il progetto palladiano ricostruisce il teatro dei romani con una precisione archeologica fondata sullo studio accurato del testo di Vitruvio e delle rovine dei complessi teatrali antichi. Con l'Olimpico rinasce il teatro degli Antichi, e nel progettarlo Palladio raggiunge una consonanza assoluta con il linguaggio della grande architettura classica.

Grazie al genio creativo e alle sue idee innovative Palladio ideò i stupendi edifici, che mutarono l'aspetto architettonico di Vicenza.

Per ulteriori informazioni vedi: <http://www.cisapalladio.org>

Buon viaggio in Italia!!!



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LA RONDINE**

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***Celebrating over
80 years of
Italian Culture
and Heritage***

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Prossime Manifestazioni

FUTURE ITALIAN CLUB MEETINGS & EVENTS

August 18-

Matera e Alberobello
by Pete Puleo

September 15-

The Enemy Among Us
by David Fiedler

October 20 -

Italian Music
(more details to follow)

***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.

**Please note our new dinner price of
\$20.00/person**

MEDICI EXHIBIT IN MEMPHIS

On Friday, April 23, 2004, an exhibit of artifacts from the Medici's opened in Memphis. The Medici's were the primary family in Florence for over 400 years. Under their tutelage the Renaissance began and developed. This exhibit includes many artifacts owned or are associated with the Medici. The Medici were responsible for sponsoring the major artists of Florence by providing them with commissions for their work. Some of the artists that received commissions from the Medici were Michaelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Giotto, Sandro Botticelli, Donatello, Fra Angelico, and Filippo Brunellschi. Works by all these artists are included in the exhibit. Some of the other objects include the Papal Ring of Pope Leo X, a fork that Caterina de' Medici introduced to the French court when she became Queen of France, a copy of Galileo's telescope, and a pair of Michaelangelo's slippers. The exhibit will be at the Pyramid in Memphis through October 3, 2004. For additional information call 1-800-2MEMPHIS or online to www.wonders.org.

SOUTHWEST SOCIAL CLUB MEMPHIS TOUR – SEPT 7-9

You are invited to join the Club on their tour to the Medici Exhibit, Graceland, Alfred's on Beale Street, Peabody Place Museum, Memphis City Tour, Peabody Duck March, Dixon Gallery and Gardens, Rock and Soul Museum and Gibson Guitar Factory. Leave Tuesday, September 7 and return Thursday, September 9. \$299/person; \$50 deposit. Contact Marie Luhn- (314) 432-2078 or LuhnMarie@aol.com

UNION AVENUE OPERA THEATRE

Puccini's -- "Turandot" -- August 20, 22, 26, 28 All performances are at 8 PM - 733 North Union Blvd., St. Louis, MO, 63108

ITALIAN CLUB FILM AND OPERA SERIES

The Italian Club's classical film and opera series will resume in September. More details to follow in the next issue.