



La Rondine

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ITALIAN CLUB OF ST. LOUIS

Jan 2004

Annales for MMIII - The Board's Report to the Membership

Next Meeting

Wednesday

January 21st

Cocktails— 6:30p.m.

Dinner— 7:00p.m.

RSVP—Dan Viele

(636) 537-5960

or

ItalianClubSTL@aol.com

"The Italian Club Christmas celebration was a rich medley of festive activity: entertainment, superb dining, a surprise visitor, and an Italian Christmas carol sing-a-long."

The purpose of the January meeting is to provide complete information on the Italian Club's performance during the past year in every area in which it was involved. In every month, other than January, the programs are cultural in nature; this one program is completely different. Its purpose is to report on how the Board has discharged its responsibility to the membership and its stewardship of the organization's resources. It is an open forum intended to provide a straightforward

look at everything that we have done, to review what was good, to consider what could have been done better, to ask questions, to discuss issues, to look at strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and most importantly to get lots of participation, discussion, and input. The approach will be to keep things as brief, light, informal, and succinct as possible, yet have detailed information available if it is needed. The specific topics covered will be financial status, membership, programs

and activities, communications, and the club's participation with the FIAO. Also, there will be the election and appointment of a new Director. The long-range goal is continuous organizational improvement; the immediate goal is involvement and participation. Perhaps we should not bother with all of this - but we believe it is important and worth doing. Be with us on January 21 and help.

by Gene Mariani

2003 Holiday Celebration- "Italian Folktales"

The Italian Club Christmas celebration was a rich medley of festive activity: entertainment, superb dining, a surprise visitor, and an Italian Christmas carol sing-a-long.

The main feature of the evening's program began with the Panettone Player's dramatization, in Italian, of three folktales taken from Italo Calvino's monumental collection of over two hundred folktales from all regions of Italy, published in 1957 under the title, "Fiabe Italiane"- "Italian Folktales." Calvino found that the tales of Tuscany and Sicily were the best in quality and quantity. Therefore, one tale from Tuscany, and two shorter ones from Sicily, taken from "Jesus and St. Peter in Sicily" were chosen to be performed. The Panettone Players participating were Antonio Perrone, Announcer and Narrator; and actors Gene Mariani, Roger Gennari, and Dorothea Rossomanno-Phillips.

The first folktale was "Pelle di Vecchia" - "The Old Woman's Hide." (Tuscan): The older jealous sisters of a young princess lie to their father, telling him that their

sister's request of a box of salt is in order to pickle him. Consequently, the father drives her from the palace, with only her maid and a small purse of gold coins. In order to protect herself from roving men, her maid buys the hide of a dead old woman, has it tanned, sews it onto cambric and clothes the princess in it. Shortly after, they meet a young prince, who is so taken with the "old woman" and her witty remarks that he offers her a room in his palace. The prince, however, becomes suspicious when he sees the beautiful work she produces spinning and embroidering. He spies on her, sees her remove her old lady's skin, and is astonished at the lovely young woman coming out of it. He falls in love. All the nearby kings and queens, including the princess' father, are invited to the wedding feast. The princess plans to serve her father's food, except for the last course, unsalted. He rejects all but the last dish, which he eats eagerly. When his daughter removes her veil, which has masked her face, she explains to him that the salt that she

had requested was not to pickle him, but was for his food. Father and daughter are happily reunited.

The second folktale was "Mamma di San Pietro" - "The Mother of Saint Peter" (Sicilian): When she dies, the selfish, and uncharitable mother of St. Peter, whose only kindly act was to begrudgingly give a beggar woman a leaf of leek, is sent to Hell. From Hell she calls to her son, St. Peter, the head of Heaven, and urges him to convince the Lord to release her from her misery in Hell, and to be allowed to enter Heaven. The Lord sends an angel down to her with a leaf of leek, to which the mother is to grab hold of, and be pulled up to Heaven. On the way up, several fellow sufferers in Hell latch on to her skirt, but the selfish woman tries to shake them off. In doing so, the leaf breaks, and the mother of St. Peter plummets back down to Hell.

In "Pietre in Pane"- "Stones to Bread" (Sicilian), the final tale, The Lord and his apostles, on their travels, find themselves out in the country with nothing to eat. The

L'Angolo Del Presidente *by James Tognoni*

My Fellow Members:

Yet another year has passed and a new cycle begins. It seems in January we are so full of good intentions and resolve to do so many things better or different. How often do we look back and think about what did not get accomplished or on a positive note what really good things happened to us during the year that just passed. And so we begin a new year. Here is hoping each of you finds it fulfilling and full of love and joy.

At our December meeting we were treated to an incredible meal by Baldo. He and his staff were truly at their finest. We were also enter-

tained by the Panetonne Players with three delightful plays. It wouldn't have been an Italian Christmas celebration without our annual visit from LaBefana! At the meeting we also voted in three new Honorary members. This honor is set-aside for those persons that do not meet the criteria for membership in the Club but whose service to the organization and the Italian community at large is much appreciated and valued. Congratulations to George Wehrle, Richard Brand and Evie Puleo, our new Honorary Members.

At our January meeting, we will be conducting the "Annales" or the annual report on the

state of our organization. This is a month when there is no formal speaker and we take care of Club business. Another important issue that evening is the election of a new Director. The election was supposed to have taken place in October but frankly, I forgot to appoint a Nominating Committee. At this time, nominees for the Director's position are: Vito Tamboli and Barbara Klein. Nominations will also be taken from the floor that evening in accordance with the by-laws. I hope to see you there!

Ciao, Jim

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2003 Holiday Celebration- "Italian Folktales" cont'd

Lord asks the apostles to each pick up a stone and carry it. Peter finds the smallest he can, so as not to exert himself. But the Lord changes the stones to bread, and Peter is left with a very small loaf. Once again the Lord makes the same request, but this time Peter selects a very large stone. The Lord quietly tells the other apostles that they will now have a laugh at Peter's expense, for nearby there is a town with bakeries filled with freshly made bread. St. Peter, weighed down by the heavy stone, arrives after the others, and becomes enraged when he sees all the bread, refusing even to taste it.

Following these tales, a sumptuous multicourse dinner was served. Each course, meticulously prepared by Da Baldo, represented a different region of Italy. Among these delicious courses were Manzo al Brunello or Pesce fresco alla Livornese; and for dessert, Tartufo da Baldo. Our surprise visitor was none other than La Befana herself, who generously distributed sweets to everyone. The evening ended fittingly with a sing-a-long of the Beautiful Italian Christmas carol, "Tu Scendi Dalle Stelle." *by Dorotea Rossomanno-Phillips*

Our sincerest condolences to Joe and Debbie Monolo on the death of his mother, Minnie Monolo.

Hill Nativity Walk

The first annual Hill Nativity Walk, sponsored by the Italian Club of St. Louis and the Hill Business Association, was a success. Nineteen nativity sets, or presepi, were on display in the windows of various Hill businesses from December 1 through January 4. The Walk was the subject of a complimentary article in the Saturday, December 20th, St. Louis Post-Dispatch and, as a result, several hundred people came to view the presepi. Thanks to all who participated--especially to those members who entered presepi: Carla Bossola, Gene Mariani, Marie Cuccia-Brand, Debbie Monolo, Jim Tognoni, and Barbara Klein. The award for best presepio by an individual was given to Rosalie DiMartino (mother of Club member, Gloria DiMartino Etling) and the award for best presepio by an organization to the Italian Club of St. Louis.

Medardo Rosso Exhibit

The Saint Louis Art Museum is currently hosting the exhibit "Medardo Rosso: Second Impressions". The show contains sixteen of his sculptures in wax, plaster, and bronze. Rosso (1858-1928), who was born in Turin, studied painting and sculpture at the Brera Academy in Milan. In 1889 he settled in Paris where he developed friendships with Auguste Rodin and Amedeo Modigliani. After experimenting with various materials, Rosso concentrated on modeling with wax over plaster, a combination he found well suited to representing effects of light and atmosphere on his subjects, thus, his artistic concerns were similar to those of the French Impressionists. Among Rosso's sculptures are several versions of "Ecce Puer" (Behold the Boy). The exhibit runs through February 15th in the Cohen Gallery (Room 313).

Italian Language Classes for the Winter Semester

beginning Monday, January 26th

**Open House Reception and Orientation
Tuesday, January 20th**

Commerce Bank Education Center
at the Missouri Botanical Garden.
4651 Shaw at Kingshighway

*for students and prospective students who want to
consult with teachers, register & purchase books*

Refreshments by the acclaimed Lo Russo's Cucina

The classes for adults are held one evening a week (two hours) for 10 consecutive weeks. The cost for all 10 weeks is \$55.00 for adults and \$30.00 for children. Textbooks for children are \$15.00 and for adults \$60.00 (Text and Exercise books included). The textbooks are re-used throughout the levels making the overall cost even more reasonable.

For additional information and to register on line: www.italystl.com/italiancourses or call 314-428-1232

TERZA PAGINA

I capolavori della poesia italiana

a cura di Barbara Klein

Jacopo di Michele, soprannominato Folgore da San Gimignano, visse all'incirca tra il 1270 e il 1330 e combatté come cavaliere per il comune di San Gimignano. La sua fama di poeta gioioso, amante della vita spensierata delle brigate cortesi, è legata soprattutto alle due collane dei "Sonetti de la semana" (otto) e dei "Sonetti de' mesi" (quattordici). Vorrei proporre ai lettori la seguente poesia:

Di gennaio

di Folgore da San Gimignano

I' doto voi nel mese di gennaio
corte con fochi di salette accese,
camer' e letta d'ogni bello arnese,
lenzuoi di seta e coperto di vaio,

tregea, confetti e mescere a razzoio,
vestiti di doagio e di racese;
e 'n questo modo stare a le difese,
muova scirocco, garbino e rovaio;

uscir di for alcuna volta il giorno,
gittando de la neve bella e bianca
alle donzelle che staran da torno;

e, quando fosse la compagna stanca,
a questa corte facciasi ritorno,
e si riposi la brigata franca

In giro per l'Italia

a cura di Barbara Klein

San Gimignano, "città delle torri"

San Gimignano si erge con il profilo delle sue torri, su di un colle (m.334) a dominio della Val d'Elsa in Toscana. Fondata nel IV a. C. dagli Etruschi con il nome di Velathri, latinizzato poi in Silvia dai Romani, la città fu successivamente dominata dai Longobardi. Il nome attuale le fu attribuito in onore di San Geminiano, vescovo di Modena, che salvò la città dalla invasione delle orde barbariche di Totila, re dei Goti.

L'espansione economica e la fortuna di San Gimignano sono legate alla sua vicinanza con la via Francigena, l'asse viario attorno al quale ruotava l'intero sistema delle comunicazioni di un tempo costantemente percorso da folle di viandanti, commercianti e dai tanti fedeli che vi si accalcavano per raggiungere, con lunghissimi pellegrinaggi, i più importanti luoghi di culto.



Divenuta così, tappa obbligata per i viaggiatori, San Gimignano da piccolo centro contadino dedito alla coltivazione di cereali e alla produzione della Vernaccia (che già da allora veniva esportata) diventò una vera e propria città protetta da una poderosa cinta muraria.

Ogni famiglia di una certa importanza cercava di dimostrare il proprio prestigio erigendo una torre accanto alla propria casa. Queste agili costruzioni raggiunsero la cifra di 72. Il problema della eccessiva concentrazione di edifici costrinse le autorità comunali a promulgare una serie di regolamenti che limitava le dimensioni. Le torri non potevano superare l'altezza della Rog-nosa (la torre del palazzo del Podestà) che era di 50,92 metri. Fu così che la città - dapprima sede Vicariale della Diocesi di Volterra - riuscì sul finire del XIII sec. a sottrarsi a questa sud-ditanza e a divenire libero comune guidato dal primo Podestà.

Ma San Gimignano era importante non solo per il potere politico ed economico. Anche l'arte e la cultura hanno accompagnato la storia di San Gimignano. Una sala del bellissimo Palazzo del Podestà ricorda che qui giunse anche Dante Alighieri come ambasciatore della lega guelfa in Toscana. Ed è lunga la lista di artisti che furono chiamati per onorare le glorie della città: Benozzo Bozzoli e la sua fantastica storia di Sant'Agostino nella omonima chiesa e Domenico Ghirlandaio, che intorno alla metà del Quattrocento decorò nel Duomo la Cappella di Santa Fina. Non furono pochi, poi, i maestri sangimignanesi, come Domenico Mainardi, Mattia Lupi e Filippo Buonaccorsi che, partiti da qui, riuscirono a conquistare molta fama nel panorama artistico italiano.

Nel tempo, la ricchezza della città e la sua intensa attività economica si spensero lasciando spazio a carestie ed epidemie fin quando, verso la metà del 1300, San Gimignano perse la sua autonomia politica e venne soggiogata al potere fiorentino. Nei secoli successivi la città turrata, pur mantenendo il suo fascino indiscutibile, fu duramente segnata dal declino, al punto che molte delle sue torri, crollarono o vennero distrutte per ricavarne materiale da costruzione. Oggi rimangono solo 14 delle 72 originarie torri. Per ulteriori informazioni vedi <http://www.sangimignano.com/sstoria.htm>

Buon viaggio in Italia!!!

Auguri per un felice anno nuovo!!

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LA RONDINE**

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

**WE'RE ON THE WEB!
WWW.ITALYSTL.COM/
ITALIANCLUB**

Prossime Manifestazioni

FUTURE ITALIAN CLUB MEETINGS

- January 15- *Annales by James Tognoni***
- February 18- *Italian Trivia Revisited
by Jerry Galleano***
- March 17- *Tenors in Opera
by Susan Wohl***
- April 21- *Roman Gladiators
by Anna Amelung
Washington University
Awards Night***

***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.***

Visconti Film Series at the Saint Louis Art Museum

The Italian Club of St. Louis and the Saint Louis Art Museum are co-sponsoring a film festival highlighting three films by the great Italian film director Luchino Visconti. The films, which examine Visconti's impressions of the German culture, are tied in with the German Art Now exhibit. The schedule is as follows:

January 16, 2004 "Ludwig" (1972, 184 min.) This biography follows King Ludwig of Bavaria, consumed by the arts and destroyed by politics, from his coronation to his descent into madness and death.

January 23, 2004, "Death in Venice" (Morte a Venezia) (1971, 130 min.) In his definitive film, director Visconti adapts Thomas Mann's classic novel about avant-garde composer Gustave von Aschenbach (Dirk Bogarde) and his travels to a Venetian seaside resort. This film will be introduced at 6:45 p.m. by Prof. Michael Syrimnis, professor of Italian Cinema at Washington University.

January 30, 2004, "The Damned" (La caduta degli dei) (1969, 150 min.) Dirk Bogarde and Helmut Berger star in this gripping drama about the downfall of a decadent aristocratic family of German industrialists during the rise of Nazism.

All films will be shown in the Auditorium at 7 p.m. The cost is \$5 for the general public and \$3 for Art Museum and Italian Club of St. Louis members.

Call for Immigrant Information

The Gruppo di Storia Locale of Arconate, Italy, is preparing a history book on the emigrants of Arconate, which is located just west of Milano. Many people from Arconate emigrated to St. Louis, Herrin, and surrounding communities. The Gruppo di Storia Locale is looking for copies of photographs, immigrant stories or letters, or stories as told by the immigrant's descendents. If you know of someone who is an immigrant from Arconate, or their descendents, please contact Barbara Klein at 314-422-3102 or send the information directly to the historical society's president Elena Monticelli at elmontic@libero.it