



December 2005

La Rondine

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ITALIAN CLUB OF ST. LOUIS

"A Christmas Dinner in Rome" *presented by the Panettone Players and directed by Roy DeBellis*

Next Meeting

Wednesday

December 21st

**Cocktails—
6:30p.m.**

**Dinner— 7:00p.m.
\$35 per person**

**RSVP—
Dan and Jan Viele**

**(636) 537-5960
or**

**ItalianClubSTL
@aol.com by noon—
Mon. Dec. 19th**

"Stollhans introduced her lecture by defining the meaning of the Renaissance as that period of cultural re-birth when Italian artists and humanists, weary of the dark and middle ages, awoke to the legacy of the classical world; a time of idealism, of pagan gods and goddesses, of glory of human form, of classical literature, and appreciation of pleasure, harmony, balance and stability."

Come see the rich and famous (and Italian) characters in *A Christmas Dinner in Rome* at the Italian Club monthly get together on December 21st at Baldo's. This pre-dinner show will be performed by the world famous *Panettone Players*. Starring in this year's production are the multi-talented: Roger Gennari, Carlo Giordano, Gloria Griffero, Eugene Mariani and Anthony Perrone. Their exquisite performances have to be seen to be believed. Directing this extravaganza, although little directing is required of such an accomplished, star-studded cast, is Roy DeBellis.

The plot revolves around twelve famous Italians and the conversations among them, while at a dinner party in Rome at Christmastime. We observe and listen to the goings on among them as the evening progresses. Did you ever wonder what Enrico Fermi, Galileo Galilei, Michelangelo Buonarroti, Sophia Loren, Federico Fellini, Dante Alighieri, Julius Caesar, Catherine De' Medici, Rocky Marciano, St. Cabrini, Leonardo DaVinci and Giuseppe Verdi might say to each other? Well, they don't let age differences bother them.

In keeping with tradition the production will be in Italian, and the audience will be furnished individual scripts in English to follow the scintillating conversations. Join us in the festivities as a prelude to Christmas. (Many thanks to Baldo for providing the rehearsal space and refreshments, gratis.) -- **Roy DeBellis**

ITALIAN CLUB OF ST. LOUIS CHRISTMAS DINNER MENU **DECEMBER 21, 2005**

Join us for a evening of great food, great company, some giveaways and a performance by the renowned Panettone Players. Not only will we enjoy each others company but we will a fantastic meal. Make your reservation early. \$35.00 per person

- Antipasto** – Involtino di Melanzane
- Primi** – Tortellini alla Panna
- Secondi** – Medaglioni di Filetto Salsa Porcini OR Salmone Limone ai Capperi
- Contorni** – Seabonis Vegetables
- Dolce** – Tartufo
- Coffee and House Wine**

"Art Patronage in Renaissance Rome" **by Cynthia Stollhans, Ph.D.**

When I first saw the title of SLU Art History Professor Cindy Stollhans' presentation for the Club's November program I knew that I had to be there. Any talk combining Rome, the Renaissance, and art patronage was something I just could not miss. At first I was skeptical, for when it comes to sculpture and painting, you'll get no argument from me that the Renaissance is alive and well in Rome – but I always thought that architecture was different. To me Roman architecture began with those arches, domes, vaults, and columns of classical antiquity, moved on to the Romanesque and lingered there awhile, completely skipped the Barbarians' Gothic, and then sped through the Renaissance to arrive at the Baroque. I felt that if you want Renaissance architecture – go to Florence, but Rome, the town of Bernini and Borromini, is a Baroque city. And as far as patronage goes, that was pretty simple; Emperors and patrician families patronized the Roman classical period and then Popes took over after that. At least that's how I felt until Dr. Stollhans' presentation got me to look at things a bit differently.

Stollhans introduced her lecture by defining the meaning of the Renaissance as that period of cultural rebirth when Italian artists and humanists, weary of the dark and middle ages, awoke to the legacy of the classical world; a time of idealism, of pagan gods and goddesses, of glory of human form, of classical literature, and appreciation of pleasure, harmony, balance and stability. She started with examples from sculpture – first, Polyclitus' 5th century B.C., *Spear Bearer*, considered by the ancient Greeks as the ultimate guide for the ideal proportions of the human body. Her *Spear Bearer* example was followed by the 1st century BC Hellenistic statue, *The Laocoon* which combines pagan

L'angolo del Presidente by James Tognoni

My Fellow Members and Friends:

I trust you had a wonderful and heart-warming Thanksgiving holiday. At our December meeting we will be having our annual Christmas party. On page one of this publication you will find the menu that has been put together by Baldo for this event. The charge this year is only \$35.00 per person. As always, it is necessary to make a reservation in advance and make certain you have made your choice of entrée. Join your fellow members for a wonderful evening which will include a premier performance by our own Panettone Players. It

promises to be a wonderful evening.

Make sure you take time to view the wonderful presepi that are part of the 3rd Annual Hill Nativity Walk. My thanks to those dedicated individuals that helped put the Walk together this year. The Walk will begin Saturday, December 3rd until January 6th.

Enjoy your friends and family, have a happy, safe and blessed Christmas and New Year's. I look forward to serving you and working with you in the New Year.

Ciao, Jim

(314) 865-1005

“Art Patronage in Renaissance Rome” cont'd

mythology with a perfect depiction of entwined forms. From first century Greece, Stollhans then leaped to 15th Italy with Michelangelo's statue of Bacchus as example; a work again combining pagan mythology with classical Hellenistic naturalism in a sensual pairing of the nude god of wine and revelry with a Satyr-like faun. The patron who commissioned *The Bacchus*, a Cardinal Riario, upon viewing the statue refused to pay Michelangelo for it. The banker, Jacopo Galli, who had guaranteed the work, paid for it and had it placed in his garden. Next presented as example of both Renaissance art and typical patronage agreement of the time, was Michelangelo's, *Pietà*. The contract, for which Jacopo Galli was again guarantor, stipulated that the work be of marble and to have a draped life-size figure of the Virgin Mary with the dead Christ in her arms. The agreement further stated that it was to be done within one year and *would be more beautiful than any work in marble to be seen in Rome today and such that no master of our own time shall be able to produce better*. The result, one of the greatest statues of all time, became the artistic standard for grace and beauty. The patron, French Cardinal Jean Bilheres de Langraules, loved the *Pietà*, as has the rest of the world ever since. From sculpture, Stollhans moved to architecture, choosing as example another work involving Michaelangelo, the Basilica of St. Peter. She began with Constantine's old 4th century St. Peter's before discussing the present Renaissance/Baroque structure, actually the work, done over many years, of several architects – Bramante, Michelangelo, and Sangallo. Here, the connection between classical times and the Renaissance was made by Stollhans' comparison of the Pantheon's dome with the Renaissance dome of St. Peter's. She concluded her lecture with Renaissance fresco painting; specifically Raphael's *stanze*, the four magnificent rooms in the Vatican quarters of Pope Julius II. She presented only two of the four frescos but she could not have chosen better examples to illustrate the spirit of the Renaissance. These were *The School of Athens*, Raphael's fresco depicting philosophers of the pagan Greek and Roman world and his *Disputation over the Most Holy Sacrament*, showing saints, scholars, and theologians of the western church. I have seen the stanze many times – and always looked at them as separate works, but through Dr. Stollhans' presentation I suddenly grasped Raphael's meaning. Molte grazie to Dr. Cindy Stollhans for an excellent presentation, one that made me think, question some prior assumptions, and to do a bit of additional reading. But isn't that what great teachers, ever since the time of the School of Athens, are supposed to inspire their students to do? *Gene Mariani*

Third Annual Hill Nativity Walk

The nativity scene is the traditional Christmas decoration in Italy and Italians spend much time and effort in preparing their nativity scene, or in Italian, “presepio.” Many community associations, such as the “Amici del presepio,” organize Nativity exhibits where individuals and artists compete for best of show, with some of the most impressive exhibits being held in Milan and Rome. The Hill Nativity Walk is our effort to bring a bit of this Italian tradition to the Hill, St. Louis' Italian-American neighborhood.

The Italian Club of St. Louis, in conjunction with the Hill Business Association, will present the Third Annual Hill Nativity Walk from Saturday, December 3rd to Friday, January 6th. Plan to visit the streets of the Hill to see these beautiful presepi.

**MARIANI AWARD
PRESENTED TO
SLU STUDENTS**

The 2005 Italian Club *Gene Mariani Award* was presented to Saint Louis University students Anne Mueller and Brendan Kottenstete at the November meeting. Miss Mueller accepted the awards both for herself and for Mr. Kottenstete, who was unable to attend. Dr. Simone Bregni, Director of SLU's Italian Program, spoke briefly about selection criteria used by the faculty to determine award winners and described the significant growth in course offerings, student enrollments, and faculty members in the SLU program. The purpose of the *Gene Mariani Award*, made possible by matching contributions by the Club, the Southwest Bank, and the Mariani family, is to assist outstanding SLU students of Italian language to travel and study through a semester in Italy. The award also supports the *Mariani Lecture* whereby the University brings a visiting professor to the SLU campus to speak each spring.

In addition to the SLU *Gene Mariani Award*, the Italian Club, for the past 15 years, has made its *Mario Pertici & Frank LoPiccolo Award* and its *Fred Giacoma Award* to students of Italian language at Washington University to assist their participation in WU's Summer Italian Program at Arezzo, Tuscany. The Southwest Bank also generously supports these awards by a matching contribution. Special recognition and heartfelt thanks are extended to member Ed Berra, President Emeritus of the Southwest Bank for his unfailing support to the Club's SLU and WU awards. Also, annual awards are made by the Italian Club to Italian language students at Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville and to students of St. Ambrose Catholic School.

-Gene Mariani

TERZA PAGINA

I capolavori della poesia italiana

a cura di Barbara Klein

Nel giorno di Natale del 1833 morì Enrichetta Blondel, la moglie di **Alessandro Manzoni** (Milano 1785 – 1873). Il Manzoni, che per questa perdita rimase terribilmente affranto, vagheggiò l'idea di riscrivere il suo inno sacro dedicato al Natale. Solo due anni dopo si accinse a farlo, iniziando un inno che nel manoscritto porta il titolo Il Natale del 1833. L'inno fu abbandonato dopo la quarta strofa.

Il Natale del 1833

di Alessandro Manzoni

Sì che Tu sei terribile!
Sì che in quei lini ascoso,
In braccio a quella Vergine,
Sovra quel sen pietoso,
Come da sopra i turbini
Regni, o Fanciul severo!
E fato il tuo pensiero,
È legge il tuo vagir.

Vedi le nostre lagrime,
Intendi i nostri gridi;
Il voler nostro interroghi,
E a tuo voler decidi.
Mentre a stornar la folgore
Trepido il prego ascende
Sorda la folgor scende
Dove tu vuoi ferir.

Ma tu pur nasci a piangere,
Ma da quel cor ferito
Sorgerà pure un gemito,
Un prego inesaudito:
E questa tua fra gli uomini
Unicamente amata,
Nel guardo tuo beata,
Ebra del tuo respir,

Vezi or ti fa; ti supplica
Suo pargolo, suo Dio,
Ti stringe al cor, che attonito
Va ripetendo: è mio!
Un dì con altro palpito,
Un dì con altra fronte,
Ti seguirà sul monte.
E ti vedrà morir.

Onnipotente

Per ulteriori testi e storie di Natale, vedi:
http://digilander.libero.it/semprerestate/testi_e_storie_di_natale.htm

In giro per l'Italia

a cura di Barbara Klein

Il Presepio di Londonio a Milano

Secondo le notizie documentarie, la consuetudine di realizzare presepi di carta fu avviata nel Seicento e specialmente diffusa nel secolo successivo. Si tratta di immagini calcografiche incollate su cartoncino; o, nel caso di strutture corpose tali da apparire come composizioni scultoree-di pitture ad olio su cartapesta incollata sopra legno: e questa è appunto la tecnica del Presepio di S. Marco di Francesco Londonio.

La collocazione di opere di questo tipo nelle chiese o in ambienti legati al culto era tipica delle regioni centro-meridionali. Ed è appunto per l'esperienza di soggiorni a Roma e a Napoli che si ritiene il Londonio abbia maturato le sue predilezioni iconografiche, oltre che particolari cadenze del suo stile.

Nato a Milano il 1723, Il Londonio aveva poi compiuto numerosi viaggi, incrociando maestri di scuole diverse; e si era via via orientato verso soggetti contadini, interpretandoli con puntiglio descrittivo della pittura di genere ma ingentilito da intonazioni arcadiche, e con una speciale capacità di cogliere le caratteristiche degli animali raffigurati. E' appunto per ragioni stilistiche, oltre che per affinità tematiche e fisionomiche, che tradizionalmente, con ampio consenso della critica, si è riferito al Londonio il bellissimo Presepio della Chiesa di S. Marco.

Il presepio è situato nella settima cappella a destra della Chiesa di S. Marco, collocazione che risulta originaria, anche se l'opera ha subito con ogni probabilità qualche impoverimento nell'inquadratura. Peraltro, l'inserirsi della scena in una struttura a balcone di specifico carattere rococò si adatta al gusto dell'artista e si accompagna al momento storico della composizione che è riferibile alla metà del XXVIII secolo.

La scena è densa di figure, elegantemente scalate sino a consentire un'ampia visione del gruppo (Maria, Giuseppe, e il piccolo Gesù sulla paglia) che chiude il triangolo compositivo.

Per ulteriori informazioni vedi www.prolocogiffonivallepiana.it

Buon viaggio in Italia!!



**Auguri di Buon Natale
e Felice Anno Nuovo a tutti!**

**THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
ITALIAN CLUB OF ST. LOUIS
LA RONDINE**

c/o Marie Cuccia-Brand
2115 North Ballas Road
St. Louis, MO 63131
Fax: 314-993-8096
e-mail: mcucciasbj@aol.com

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Prossime manifestazioni

FUTURE ITALIAN CLUB MEETINGS and EVENTS

- Wednesday, December 21-** **Annual Christmas Celebration and a short play-**
"A Christmas Dinner in Rome" presented by the Panettone Players
Twelve famous Italians meet for Christmas dinner and converse with one another
- Wednesday, January 18-** **Annales- Report to the Membership**
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.
\$35.00/person for December only; regular meetings are \$20.00/person.
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- Saturday, December 3-** **Christmas on the Hill 3-11 p.m.**
Sponsored by the Hill 2000 and the Hill Business Association
Carriage Rides, Tarantella Dancers, Carolers & more
- Saturday, December 3—Friday, January 6—Third Annual Hill Nativity Walk**
Sponsored by the Italian Club of St. Louis and the Hill Business Assn
Tour Marconi, Shaw and Edwards Avenues
- Thursday, December 8** **Carol Faenzi, author of The Stonecutter's Aria, will have a**
booksigning at Girasole Gifts and Imports 5:30—7:30p.m.