MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

Buon anno! Happy New Year to everyone from the Board of the Italian Cultural Society. We hope you have had a joyful Christmas, and, in case you missed it, you can watch the beautiful video of the ICS Christmas presentation at https://youtu.be/MMsoaoWSbPs. Please also take the opportunity to also watch the excellent video of our wonderful ICS Gala at https://youtu.be/DyVyieMtJ40.

To be sure, along with all of you we look forward to 2021 being a much better year than 2020. Heavens! What we have all gone through! COVID-19! Isolation! Our children learning on-line! Working from home (if we are lucky!) The tumultuous presidential election! Yet even now, with the recent disturbing events in our nation's capital, we still look to a new President Biden administration with the strong hope and faith that America will pick itself up and walk into a brighter future for ALL of our people, no matter their color or country of origin. The promise of America is for all of us. We are one. Siamo uniti! And we look forward to COVID being brought under control as we all get vaccinated during the coming months. (We urge you to do so.)

In connection with the new year, our January 31 virtual social meeting will feature Italian writer and Corriere della Sera journalist Beppe Severgnini, who spent several happy years in Washington, which he recorded in his book “Ciao America!” Severgnini will be presenting his new book “Neoitaliani. 50 reasons to be Italian” in conversation with our own board member and Bloomberg journalist, Sarah Forden. The two journalists will discuss the recent challenging COVID events in Italy and here, and perhaps comment on the current political situations in both countries. You can register for this free event at https://icssevergni-ni.eventbrite.com. We look forward to seeing you there and at all the events as we develop them during this year. And please register for your favorite courses: https://italianculturalsociety.org/ilp/.

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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS
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WE ARE SOCIAL!
SUPPORT THE ICS
BECOME A MEMBER
AMAZON SMILE
FESTA DI NATALE 2020

BY DARIO PENZO, ICS INSTRUCTOR

Il 20 Dicembre scorso, l’Italian Cultural Society ha concluso questo anno anomalo con la tradizionale Festa di Natale; evento irrinunciabile per gli studenti più piccoli e una possibilità di distrazione per i molti che vogliono festeggiare ma non se la sentono di uscire di casa. Una piccola festa piena di emozioni, una passeggiata dinamica tra la commemorazione dei 100 di Gianni Rodari e performance di professionisti della musica, passando attraverso le poesie recitate dai ragazzi e i canti natalizi del Coro ICS.

Quale modo migliore di cominciare se non con l’esibizione del ConTemprary duo dei Maestri Luigi Picardi e Felicia Toscano, che ci immergono subito nello spirito natalizio.

A seguire, la Professoressa Annelise Brody Moraninci ci ha presentato il “ Favoliere Italiano” Rodari, uomo che ha dedicato la sua breve vita alla letteratura per l’infanzia. Molte sono le poesie che l’autore ha scritto sul tema Natalizio; e i vari bambini delle classi di lingue, guidati dai loro insegnanti Fiorenza Castelli, Giovanna Galletta e Dario Penzo, ne hanno studiate e recitate alcune per il pubblico della Festa.

Il Coro dell’ICS, diretto dal Maestro Felicia Toscano, ha seguito con dei classici canti di Natale. Un ringraziamento particolare va fatto ai videomakers Luca Garbarino e Francesca Picardi, che ci hanno garantito un’alta qualità e professionalità.

Uno dei momenti salienti, quello che ha fatto sorridere e scaldare il cuore dei partecipanti, è stato proprio il brindisi finale. In un periodo storico dove Zoom è diventato il nostro quotidiano, dove incontri e classi sono attraverso il piccolo schermo di un computer, il semplice gesto di attivare la videocamera e vedere tutti i presenti sorridere e scambiarsi gli auguri, sollevando un bicchiere di Prosecco, ci ha dato una parvenza di normalità e fatto sentire più sicuri nel futuro incerto.

Vi siete persi la Festa di Natale e volete rivederla? Clicca qui o visitate il canale YouTube dell’Italian Cultural Society.
On December 20th, the Italian Cultural Society concluded this anomalous year with the traditional Christmas party; an essential event for the youngest students and a possibility of distraction for the many who want to celebrate but don’t feel like leaving the house.

A small party full of emotions, a dynamic walk between the commemoration of Gianni Rodari’s 100th anniversary and performances by music professionals, passed through the poems recited by the children and the Christmas carols of the ICS Choir.

What better way to start than with the performance of the ConTemprry duo of Maestros Luigi Picardi and Felicia Toscano, who immediately immersed us in the Christmas spirit.

Afterwards, Professor Annelise Brody Moraninci introduced us to the “Italian Favoliere” Rodari, a man who dedicated his short life to literature for children. There are many poems that the author had written on the Christmas theme; and the children of the various language classes, led by their teachers Fiorenza Castelli, Giovanna Galletta and Dario Penzo, studied and recited some for the audience of the festival.

The ICS Choir, directed by Maestro Felicia Toscano, followed with classic Christmas carols. Special thanks go to videomakers Luca Garbarino and Francesca Picardi, who guaranteed us a high quality and professionalism.

One of the highlights, the one that made the participants smile and warm their hearts, was the last toast. In a historical period where Zoom has become our daily life, where meetings and classes are through the small screen of a computer, the simple gesture of activating the video camera and seeing everyone present smile and exchange greetings raising a glass of Prosecco, gave a semblance of normality and made one feel more secure in our uncertain future.

Did you miss the Christmas party and want to see it again? Click here or visit the YouTube channel of the Italian Cultural Society.
PRESERVING AND PROMOTING ITALIAN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

BEPPE SEVERGNINI - NEOITALIANI
RSVP & TICKETS HERE

January Virtual Event

SUNDAY, JANUARY 31ST, 3:00 PM (ET)

50 Reasons to be Italian from his latest book NEOITALIANI published by Rizzoli 2020

To RSVP and Info https://italianculturalsociety.org/events/

Presents: Beppe Severgnini in conversation with Sara Forden

Beppe Severgnini is a columnist and an editor at Corriere della Sera, which he joined in 1995. He was the editor-in-chief of its weekly magazine 7, from 2017 to 2019 and he created Italians in 1998 – the longest-running blog in the Italian media. He recently launched Fotosintesi, a video-column for Corriere TV. He became a contributing opinion writer for The New York Times in 2013. His writing has appeared in The Financial Times and The Economist, where he was the Italy correspondent from 1996 to 2003.

He’s the author of eighteen books, including the American bestsellers Ciao, America! An Italian Discovers the U.S. and La Bella Figura: A Field Guide to the Italian Mind. His most recent books are Neoitaliani (Rizzoli, 2020); Italiani si rimane (Solferino, Milan 2018), a memoir; and Off the Rail – A Train Trip Through Life (Berkley, New York 2019).

Sara Forden is a journalist and Board Member of the Italian Cultural Society. She lived in Milano for more than 22 years, during which time she reported for The International Herald Tribune, Women’s Wear Daily, Dow Jones and Bloomberg, where she is currently an editor leading a team that covers lobbying in Washington and most recently the rollout of aid to small businesses struggling to survive the pandemic.

She published “The House of Gucci,” in 2000 with Harper Collins, recounting the family saga behind the story of one of fashion’s most powerful brands. Her Italian years started in Bologna in 1986, where she studied for an MA in Economics and International Affairs from the Johns Hopkins University School for Advanced International Studies (SAIS).
REPORT OF THE ITALIAN LANGUAGE PROGRAM

BY FRANCESCA CASAZZA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Anno nuovo, vita nuova! “A new year and a new beginning,” we say in Italy.

At the Italian Language Program, the year started in a positive way, with a new website, an easier way to register to our courses and a new curriculum designed around the new adopted textbook.

Winter Term 2021 started this week, and we are pleased to see our students back, after a long break, looking forward to sharing pleasant moments of discovery and learning, while the outside world is facing unprecedented challenges. Art, music – culture - is the hope for a better world and we will do our best to keep promoting high quality programs, events, scholarships, courses and more.

I am very glad to see more members involved and passionate about our mission. Together, we will be able to encourage and bring more culture and the best of Italian culture, to those around us. Feel free to contact us to be more involved.

Below are a few pictures of the children's workshop La Befana e l’Epifania. See Fiorenza’s next Reading Workshops starting on January 19th, as well as Summer Camps information. Registrations are open, although we cannot confirm, especially for the June weeks, if they are going to be in person or on Zoom, like last summer. Same web page for Children language courses, which just resumed this week.

Do not miss Cooking Class of January 19th, with Laura and you are still in time to join Latin 1 that started last Monday. A few other courses can accept more students:

Beginners and Elementary courses just started, but you are still in time to join some of them; Listening to Music in italiano (B1-C2), with Felicia; Italy Today (A2-B1) with Nicoletta; Pre-Intermediate (B1) and Advanced Grammar & Conversation (B2-C1) with Dario; Leggere l’Italia e gli italiani (B2-C1), with Nicoletta; Yoga in Italiano, Literature of Decadentism (B2-C2), and Dante’s world (C1-C2) with Annelise.

Register by check + email, or online.

Vi aspettiamo!

Francesca Casazza, Executive Director
In 2020 and 2021 our class traveled on the Via Francigena, one of the most important pilgrimage routes of the Middle Ages. It stretched from Canterbury to Rome. We covered the route from the Alps to Rome.

Making a long pilgrimage was a difficult and arduous undertaking in the days when there were few safe places to rest and heal. In response, hospitals were built along the entire Via Francigena from the 11th century to meet the needs of pilgrims. This essay takes a look at the Hospital of Siena, the city that was one of the milestones along the Via Francigena. Pilgrims went to Siena to visit its famous Duomo and its relics. Once there, the pilgrims needed a place to rest. The hospital, located directly in front of the cathedral (hence the name “della Scala”), satisfied this need.

The Siena hospital is one of the first and one of the longest-running in Europe. Santa Maria della Scala was not only concerned with pilgrims, but it was also an important civic institution that took care of abandoned children, the poor, and the sick. It was financed by donations. Over time it had been greatly expanded and had acquired agricultural land that supported the population in times of famine. In addition to giving food and accommodation to the pilgrims while they were in Siena, Santa Maria gave L’Ospedale di Siena - Santa Maria della Scala

By Susan Absher, ICS Student, - Translation by Salvatore Romano


Fare un lungo pellegrinaggio era un’impresa difficile e ardua nei giorni in cui c’erano pochi posti sicuri per riposarsi e curarsi. In risposta, lungo tutta la via Francigena, a partire dall’XI secolo sorsero ospedali per soddisfare le esigenze dei pellegrini. Questo saggio dà uno sguardo all’Ospedale di Siena, la città che era una delle tappe fondamentali lungo la Via Francigena. I pellegrini andavano a Siena per visitare il suo famoso Duomo e le sue reliquie. Una volta arrivati, i pellegrini avevano bisogno di un posto per riposare. L’ospedale, situato direttamente di fronte al duomo (quindi il nome “della Scala”), ha soddisfatto questo bisogno.

L’ospedale di Siena è uno dei primi ed è uno dei più longevi d’Europa. S. Maria della Scala non si occupava solo dei pellegrini, ma era un’importante istituzione civica che si prendeva cura dei bambini abbandonati, dei poveri e dei malati. Era finanziato da donazioni. Nel tempo è stato molto ampliato, ed ha acquistato terreni agricoli che sostenevano la popolazione in tempi di carestia. Oltre a dare cibo ed alloggio ai pellegrini mentre erano a Siena, Santa Maria gli ha dato tagliandi cioè “vouchers” per cibo e bevande durante il loro transito nel territorio senese. Erano un po’ come i pacchetti turistici oggi, ma l’ospedale non li faceva pagare!

Oggi è un museo importante. È un vero complesso con un museo archeologico, chiese, oratori e cappelle, un museo d’arte per bambini e le antiche bandiere delle contrade, ecc. Ci vuole un giorno per vedere tutto.
Poche Parole

January 2021
Vol. XXXVIII
No. 5

PRESERVING AND PROMOTING ITALIAN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE


Il primo affresco è La crescita dell’ospedale.
Dipinto cent’anni dopo che il Pellegrinaio è stato costruito, dimostra che questo era già troppo piccolo. Lo spazio non era più sufficiente per il numero di pellegrini.

Il Pranzo dei Poveri.
Una funzione importante dell’ospedale era ovviamente quella di preparare i pasti. Vediamo a sinistra un servo che porta il cibo mentre al centro il rettore saluta un povero. L’ospedale ha nutrito poveri, ammalati, e mendicanti così come pellegrini.
La Cura e il Governo degli Infermi.
Vediamo qui i malati circondati da medici ed oblati, compreso il rettore con cappello nero e mantello marrone. A destra (e nel particolare) vediamo un frate agostiniano che prende la confes-

them coupons, that is “vouchers,” for food and drinks during their transit in the Sienese territory. They were a bit like tourist packages today, but the hospital didn’t charge them! Today Santa Maria della Scala is an important museum. It is a real complex with an archaeological museum, churches, oratories, chapels, an art museum for children, and the ancient flags of the districts, etc. It takes a day to see everything.

For our purposes, however, let’s take a look at the Pellegrinaio. The Pellegrinaio is the room where male pilgrims were housed. The Pellegrinaio is a huge space, a hall, with an important fresco cycle depicting the hospital’s history and how it was used. The hall was built in 1328, and the frescoes date back to the fifteenth century. Today, eight fresco panels remain. Let’s look at five of these, all painted by Domenico di Bartolo between 1441 and 1444.

The first fresco is “The Growth of the Hospital.”
Painted a hundred years after the Pellegrinaio was built, it shows that it was already too small. The space was no longer sufficient for the number of pilgrims.

The second fresco is “The Lunch for the Poor.”
An important function of the hospital was obviously to prepare meals. On the left we see a servant carrying food while in the center the rector greets a poor man. The hospital fed the poor, the sick, beggars, as well as pilgrims.

The third fresco is “The Care and Gov-
sion of a patient while two servants carry a corpse covered with a cloak containing the hospital emblem.

Lo sposalizio delle Fanciulle.
Questo affresco mostra la vita dei bambini abbandonati all’ospedale. Alla sinistra vediamo la cura dei bambini e l’istruzione dei ragazzi e ragazze. All’ospedale tutti e due hanno acquisito abilità e si sono preparati per la loro vita futura. Alla destra vediamo il matrimonio di una giovane, celebrato sotto l’occhio del rettore. La dote (dowry) della ragazza consisteva spesso di panni e abiti fatti dalle ragazze all’ospedale.

Il Papa Concede L’Indulgenza.
Qui vediamo Papa Eugenio IV che concede un’indulgenza al rettore dell’ospedale. L’affresco celebra il ritorno del Papa a Siena dopo decenni di tensione con la città. Questo è stato dipinto non molto tempo dopo la fine del grande scisma papale. È una scena di riconciliazione.

ernation of the Sick.”
Here we see the sick surrounded by doctors and oblates, including the rector with a black hat and brown cloak. On the right (and in particular) we see an Augustinian friar who takes the confession of a patient while two servants carry a corpse covered with a cloak containing the hospital emblem.

The fourth fresco is “The Marriage of the Maidens.”
This fresco shows the life of children abandoned in the hospital. On the left we see the care of children and the education of boys and girls. At the hospital, they both acquired skills and prepared for their future life. On the right we see the marriage of a young girl, celebrated under the eye of the rector. The girl’s dowry often consisted of cloths and dresses made by the girls at the hospital.

The fifth fresco is “The Pope Grants the Indulgence.”
Here we see Pope Eugene IV granting an indulgence to the rector of the hospital. The fresco celebrates the Pope’s return to Siena after decades of tension with the city. This was painted not long after the end of the great papal schism. It is a scene of reconciliation.
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