The Holiday Season started off bright at this year’s Festa di Natale! The ICS members and children gathered around to celebrate Italian language and culture with lots of love and happiness.

Our Festa opened with lovely remarks by our Executive Director, Francesca Casazza, who welcomed the crowd with a warm embrace. Afterwards, she introduced the winner of the ICS 2022 Luciana Montanari-Mendola Award, Dylan Shenker. Playing noteworthy pieces by Liszt, Chopin and Debussy, he enchanted the crowd with a beautiful piano concert. In the meantime, Maestra Fiorenza Castelli led her annual holiday arts and crafts workshop with the children. They had the opportunity to exercise their creativity by creating colorful drawings and decorative ornaments filled with glittery shimmer and shine. After the remarkable piano performance, the children recited a few of their poems to the crowd and sang some traditional carols with much cheer!

In the middle of all this joy, Babbo Natale made his entrance to an airy piano rendition of “Here Comes Santa Claus.” His elves helped him bring along tons of gift-filled sacks for the children, all of which had been wonderful students this year. One by one, the children received their regalo, thanking him with a merry “grazie mille!” After a few photos with Santa by the Christmas tree, the crowd moved into the main hall to enjoy a delicious merenda. They indulged in some salumi, pandoro, and panettone alongside refreshing Aperol Spritz and crisp Prosecco for a delightful brindisi.

The holiday festivities concluded with a marvelous raffle conducted by some of the ICS children. Many lucky winners brought home a Campari basket and some even won Italian lessons over at the Academia Italiana di Salerno – che gioia!

Special thanks to our sponsors Ferrero and Campari and to the organizations who collaborated, Le DIVE, and Italians in DC. Check out video snippets from the event on our YouTube Channel and photos on our Instagram and Facebook Page.

This year’s Festa was surely one to remember. May the New Year bring you and your family renewed prosperity, good health, and much joy!

By Derek A. Ginoris.
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Dear Members,

The holiday season is fast approaching. In Italy on December 8th (for the Immaculate conception) all Christmas trees are decorated and the nativity scene is on display. In some regions like Emilia Romagna for example, St. Lucy (Santa Lucia), the patron saint of the eyesight, will bring gifts to the good children on December 13th.

As another year is coming to an end, it is that time for us at ICS to look at all that we have accomplished and at the challenges we have encountered. Although the pandemic is still a factor, our students are definitively coming back bringing liveliness to our premises. It has been wonderful to go back teaching in person and rekindle much needed human contact. I am very happy to say that our in person classes are growing, together with our zoom classes.

We continue to deliver excellence in Italian language and culture learning, in addition to our Latin courses and Latin literature in line with our mission of diffusing the best of Italy in the USA.

We also have developed many services for the community all listed on our website. If you need a translator, an interpreter of Italian/English, for an hour, a day or a week, we got you covered. Do you wish to organize a cooking party at your home with one of our cooking instructors? We can personalize the menu to your event / taste and you can be sure that everyone is going to have a fun time learning new skills and a few Italian words.

Any guests in town and want to show off our cities? We have licensed guides that would love to take you and your guests for a custom tour of Washington DC.

We also offer personal and group tours of the Italian collection at the National Gallery of Art both in Italian and English.

This past year had a very rich arrays of cultural events, culminating with our traditional Christmas party and we appreciated that so many of you are following us.

Our next season is going to be even more enticing, if possible. We are in partnership with a movie theater (soon to be announced on the website) that offers a serie of Italian movies both classical and new. We are also going to have a translation series of Italian classics, from Dante to Leopardi in conversation with the translators and much more!

I suggest that you keep and eye on our website and in your email inbox to make sure to catch them all.

Our annual gala was a fantastic success. We are working hard to make the next one just as fabulous, so stay tuned. This is the season to be giving and we could not be where we are if it was not for your support and your generosity. We are so very grateful to have you as part of our organization. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

I wish you and your families peace, joy, health and a very merry holiday season.

See you in 2023!

Annelise Brody Morani
Chair of the ICS Board of Directors
Dear Friends,

The Winter schedule is online and you are invited to register between January 1st and January 6th, but registration is already open, in case you prefer to confirm your attendance now. After January 6th, the tuition fee might increase slightly. Therefore, take advantage of the “early bird” tuition fee, and allow our administration and teachers to organize their work better, by registering when indicated.

New beginner courses will start both in the evening, and in the morning, online and in person, as well as other levels, from beginners 2, to elementary, intermediate and advanced levels.

Among the new courses online and in person, we have the pleasure of presenting: “Leggere insieme (B1-C1),” “La letteratura delle corti: Ludovico Ariosto e Torquato Tasso (B2-C2, also for Italian natives),” “The collections of the Barberini Palace in Rome (B1-C1),” “Impara dai proverbi (B2-C2),” “Parliamo di arte (B2-C2),” “I Promessi Sposi (B2-C2),” “Passeggiate nella grammatica (A1-B1).”

As for courses for travelers this term, you can explore the regions Puglia and Sardegna. Latin courses of different levels will continue online, and Cooking classes both in person and online. Please contact us if you would like to host the class in your house, and for you it will be free!

Finally, I invite you to try our yoga classes, to keep your body as trained and young as your mind.

For the children, Maestra Fiorenza is planning our next Themed workshop on “La Befana e I Re Magi” on January 6th, from 6:30-9:30pm (parents’ night out)

Please consider giving an Italian course as a Christmas gift. See our Christmas gift card!

If you missed our Festa di Natale, you can watch an excerpt on our YouTube Channel, as well as if you want to watch our other past events and videos.

Your support and appreciation for our courses and events were very valuable to us this year, and we look forward to seeing your involvement continue to grow. The calendar of events is on our webpage Upcoming events.

Please consider your end-of-year donation to the ICS and take advantage of the free tickets to go to the AFI Silver Spring, to watch the recommended Italian movies.

Stay healthy and keep enjoying Italian culture with us, from your home and in person.

Affettuosì auguri di Buone Feste,

Francesca Casazza
CEO & Executive Director

The best gift for your loved ones might be a course at the ICS, to learn and appreciate a world of culture and beauty!
On December 4th we had the pleasure of hosting a conversation with Giorgio A. Chiarva on his book, “The Gentleman Banker,” celebrating Amadeo Peter Giannini’s extraordinary life and vision. The event was in collaboration with Georgetown University, Department of Italian & OSDIA (Order Sons and Daughters of Italy in America), and took place both in person at the ICS Headquarters and online. The author, in connection via Zoom from Genoa, Italy, was interviewed by Donatella Melucci, Professor at Georgetown University and Anna Lawton, PhD, Writer and Publisher. The book translators, Martina Benedetti Marshall and Danielle Guida, also joined the event remotely.

One of the main reasons that prompted G. Chiarva to write about the extraordinary life of the Italian-American visionary founder of Bank of Italy - which later became Bank of America - was his obsession with the fact that Giannini was almost unknown in Italy.

As a result, Chiarva decided to recount how Giannini’s life and career transformed American society in the form of a novel, which would have been a far more fascinating and inspiring reading than the already existing historical biographies on the Italian-American banker.

Giannini was a pioneer, who dedicated his life to help others to excel. As Prof. Melucci points out, he granted micro-loans to hundreds of Italian immigrants and other citizens who lacked collateral, financed Charlie Chaplin, who was turned down by other banks. It was the first time that a loan was granted without interest and repaid through box office revenues. The same happened with Walt Disney, Bill Hewlett and David Packard, and Joseph Strauss, the engineer behind the Golden Gate Bridge. By giving the underrepresented working-class access to credit, Giannini helped many Americans to rebuild what they lost during the San Francisco Earthquake of 1906. However, Giannini’s benevolent mindset and generosity led to further accomplishments in the broader American community too. As a matter of fact, he also set out to help women, who, as it happened, had won the right to vote in California in 1911 (in the rest of the United States in 1920). In 1921, Giannini established...
department devoted exclusively to them, the Women's Bank. A bank made of women, for women, at the head of which Giannini put a woman, Chiarva notes.

Giannini was also committed to promoting the discovery and treatment of human disease. On his 75th birthday, May 6, 1945, he created and endowed the A. P. Giannini Foundation with a personal gift of nearly $500,000 to support innovative research in the basic sciences and applied fields. As a final demonstration of his philanthropism, before dying in 1949, Giannini donated his entire wealth, $490,000, to the Giannini-Bank of America fund. The sum was in favor of the Bank of America employees' children, which, as Chiarva observes, was an unprecedented event in the banking industry.

“The Gentleman Banker” was translated into English by Martina Benedetti Marshall and Danielle Guida, who studied under Prof. Melucci in her Italian Translation course at Georgetown University. Being Italian American like Giannini himself, both Martina and Danielle found the translation enjoyable and interesting on a personal level as well. Working on this project allowed them to discover the fascinating story of Giannini and Bank of America, which despite beginning in the 19th century is filled with themes that are incredibly relevant nowadays. Anna Lawton, founder of the publishing house, supervised the pre-production stage and personally read and edited the text before sending it off to be printed.

Special thanks to the Order Sons and Daughters of Italy in America, the Italian Department at Georgetown University, and New Academia Publishing for collaborating with the ICS to make this wonderful event possible! The novel is available for purchase through our website or through that of New Academia Publishing.

By Emanuela Ciriotti.

You can watch the December 4th webinar on our YouTube channel.
Angelo Badalamenti, the acclaimed composer who created theme music history with Twin Peaks, died on December 11th at his New Jersey home. He was 85 years old.

He became famous mainly for his partnership with David Lynch, for whom he composed the soundtracks to Blue Velvet, The Straight Story, Mulholland Drive, and above all, the famous 1990’s TV-series Twin Peaks. He also collaborated with David Bowie, Paul McCartney, Pet Shop Boys, Anthrax, LL Cool J, Michael Jackson, Nina Simone, Isabella Rossellini, Marianne Faithfull, and many others.

Angelo Badalamenti was born on March 22nd, 1937, in Brooklyn. A second-generation Italian-American of Sicilian origin, he was the second of four children of John Badalamenti, a fish market owner, and Leonora (Ferrari) Badalamenti, a seamstress. Angelo was a gifted pianist and prolific composer from a young age. He attended the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, N.Y., and earned a master's degree at the Manhattan School of Music in 1960. He went from teaching music at a Brooklyn junior high school to composing for Lynch after he was hired to be Isabella Rossellini’s singing coach on crime mystery Blue Velvet. This was the first of his many collaborations with Lynch during his over 50-year career.

The internationally sought-after composer also wrote the opening theme to the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona. He won the 1990 Grammy for Best Pop Instrumental Performance for the theme song to Twin Peaks. In 2008 he earned the Lifetime Achievement Award at the World Soundtrack Awards and received the prestigious Henry Mancini Award from ASCAP, presented by Lynch, three years later.
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ABOUT ICS

The Italian Cultural Society of Washington D.C. (ICS) is your home for cultural and social events in the Washington metropolitan area, and for courses to learn or improve your Italian. Our community is growing and involving the entire US.

OUR MISSION

The Italian Cultural Society promotes the appreciation and knowledge of the Italian language and culture by creating opportunities through language programs, cultural events, and partnerships.

OUR HISTORY

Founded in 1953 by Professor Salvatore J. Castiglione, Chairman of the Italian Department of Georgetown University, the Society launched its Italian Language Program in 1974, with contribution of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

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