Dear ICS Members,

We opened the month of February with Professor Benedetti’s book *A Country of Paper*, presented on February 9th at 7:00 p.m. The book originally written in Italian, has been translated into English and the author, in conversation with Professor Melucci. *A Country of Paper* spans two countries (the United States and Italy), three generations of women (Alice, her daughter Jane and her granddaughter Sara), and more than sixty years, from World War II to 2011. It tackles issues of cultural identity, family ties, displacement and loss, as it follows Sara in her journey to L’Aquila, Italy, to fulfill her grandmother’s last wish. This event was available online or in person and book purchases can be made in person or online. In partnership with the AFI Theater in Silver Spring, on February 19th at 5:00 pm, we are inviting you for a special screening of *Cinema Paradiso*, followed by wine reception and a sweet surprise for all the guests. This beloved movie and 1990 Oscar winner for the Best Foreign Language film, tells the story of a coming of age and a lifelong friendship between little Salvatore and Alfredo, a film operator in the small imaginary Sicilian village of Giancaldo.

On February 26th at 2:30 pm, I will be in conversation with Professor Virginia Jewiss who will be presenting her new translation of Dante’s *New Life*. Censored by the Church, written in the Tuscan vernacular rather than Latin, exploring the courtly love tradition of the medieval troubadours, and employing an unprecedented hybrid form to link the thirty-one poems with prose commentary, *Vita Nuova*, first published in 1294, represents both an innovation in the literature of love and the work of Dante’s that brings this extraordinary poet into clearest view. This limpid new translation, based on the latest authoritative Italian edition and featuring the Italian on facing pages, captures the ineffable quality of a work that has inspired the likes of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Charles Baudelaire, T. S. Eliot, Jorge Luis Borges, Robert Penn Warren, and Louise Glück, and sustains the long afterlife of a masterpiece that is itself a key to the ultimate poetic journey into the afterlife, The Divine Comedy. New at ICS is our monthly appointment with the Friday night authentic Italian aperitivo with our instructors and staff for anyone who loves Italy, Italian language and wishes to come and meet friends and talk in Italian. The event is open to anyone, beginners and non Italian speakers as well. For the next event, please RSVP by March 2nd at 2:00 p.m.

February is also the month of Carnevale and we are celebrating with a Festa organized by Casa Italiana Language School ed Ente Promotore in partnership with Italians in DC, Le D.I.V.E., The Italian Cultural Society of Washington DC, The Abruzzo and MoliseHeritage Society, Casa Italiana Sociocultural Center Inc. on Sunday, Feb. 12th. – Get details and RSVP on our webpage [https://italianculturalsociety.org/carnevale/](https://italianculturalsociety.org/carnevale/) or by sending an email to: info@casaitalianaente.org

Buon Carnevale a tutti!

*Annalise Brody Morani*
Chair of the ICS Board of Directors
Dear Friends,

Winter term started very well, with courses online, in person, and hybrid. More courses are about to start, for Session 2, this Monday 13th: BEGINNERS 2 (A1), ELEMENTARY 1 (A2), ELEMENTARY 2 (A2), ITALIAN THROUGH LITERATURE (B2-C2), ADVANCED CONVERSATION, READING & GRAMMAR REVIEW (C1-C2), NARRATIVA CLASSICA E CONTEMPORANEA (C1-C2), COOKING CLASSES, and for Courses for Travelers, we will offer DISCOVER SARDEGNA and DISCOVER PUGLIA.

Cooking classes will be online, on Feb. 25th "Baking with Simona", and then in person again, in Tenleytown, with Emanuela, on March 4th "Pizza: il cuore di Napoli". Please contact us if you would like to host a cooking class in your house, and for you it will be free!

Next CELI Exam Preparation Course: Thursday, Feb. 16-23, Mar. 2 and 9, from 5:30-8:00pm online.

Finally, you can try Yoga in italiano on a drop-in basis, or for the rest of the semester.

Our next ICS trip, accompanied by one of our instructors and organized by Bethesda Travel will be to Toscana and Emilia Romagna, August 31st-September 9th. (Maximum 22 people – reserve ASAP!)

Stay tuned for book presentations, movie screenings and more upcoming events.

Francesca Casazza
CEO & Executive Director

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The Italian Cultural Society of Washington D.C.
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September is the perfect month to travel to Italy!

We are thrilled to offer the ICS 2023 annual trip accompanied by one of our instructors and organized by Bethesda Travel Center LLC.

This year’s trip will include Tuscany and Emilia Romagna from August 31-September 9th with Annelise Brody Morani. Emphasis will be the scenery, history, and food production of these two regions of Central Italy.

Minimum of 15, maximum of 22 participants: $6,500 per person including flight. See itinerary and details to reserve your place.

Space is very limited. To register, visit www.BethesdaTravel.com/ICS

For questions, contact Bethesda Travel Center, tel: 301-656-1670 / email: ciao@bethesdatravel.com
ICS TOSCANA & EMILIA ROMAGNA TRIP: ITINERARY & SUMMARY

AUG/SEP

31 – Airport check in for projected flight from Dulles: AZ619 16:20 IAD-FCO 07:05 (next day)

01 – Arrival in Rome and hit the road to head north to Siena, stop in Orvieto for lunch and a visit. Check- in NH Siena or similar (4n). Welcoming dinner. Benvenuti in Toscana! (L,D)

02 – Hotel breakfasts included. Morning Siena orientation guided city tour. Free time to rest and explore on your own this afternoon. Group dinner. (B,D)

03 – Full day in the Val d’Orcia today: visits to charming countryside Pienza and Montalcino, wine tasting lunch (B,L)

04 – Head to Chianti today: Radda, San Gimignano, a hands-on cooking class of Tuscan specialties, and a wine tasting lunch (B,L)

05 – Depart for Bologna with a full day in Florence en route. Guided visits to the Accademia and Uffizi Museums plus free time for shopping and exploring. Evening arrival in Bologna at the Royal Carlton or similar (4n) dinner. (B,D)

06 – Guided visit to Bologna’s historic center including San Petronio and the Archiginnasio. Free time this afternoon for shopping and exploring. Independent meals (B)

07 – Early morning excursion today to Parma to see how Parmigiano Reggiano is made, learn about Parma Prosciutto production, and for a specialty lunch. Independent dinners back in Bologna. (B,L)

08 – Visit an acetaia today (Balsamic vinegar producer). Free time for lunch in Modena, followed by a visit to the Ferrari Museum in Maranello. Farewell dinner at the hotel (B,D)

09 – Early morning transfer to Bologna airport for flight home, projected AZ 1312 BLQ 06:30-07:30 FCO connecting to AZ618 FCO 10:20-14:20 IAD

This unique itinerary to discover Tuscany and Emilia Romagna has been designed for students and friends of the Italian Cultural Society at the cost of $6,500 per person double occupancy (single supplement + $1,850) inclusive of flights (reserved coach seating with checked bag), transfers at all points, nightly 4-star accommodations in carefully chosen and centrally located hotels with daily breakfasts, wine tasting, cooking class, and meals as listed in the itinerary, trip escort, guided touring with entry fees. Transit time on the bus will be dedicated to sharpening our Italian skills and knowledge of the Italian culture. Trip price is based on a minimum of 15 travelers. To ensure the quality of the program, the trip is limited to 22 travelers. Spaces filled on a first come, first served basis.

Flight upgrades and pre-/post-trip extensions available and priced upon request.
Trip insurance is strongly recommended and will be made available to all participants.
To register, a non-refundable deposit of $2,500 per person is due by March 17, 2023, with balance due June 30, 2023 by check or bank transfer.

Please don’t wait! Register at www.BethesdaTravel.com/ICS
**FEBRUARY CULTURAL EVENTS**

**MOVIE NIGHT AT AFI THEATER SILVER SPRING**

*Sunday, February 19th, 5:00 pm at the AFI Silver Theatre and Cultural Center (capacity 400 people) 8633 Colesville Rd, Silver Spring, MD 20910*

The ICS, in collaboration with AFI Theater Silver Spring, is pleased to invite you to a special screening of NUOVO CINEMA PARADISO. After the screening, there will be an Italian wine reception and a sweet surprise for all the guests. Tickets will be available for purchase through AFI. See our [Events](#) page for more details.

Giuseppe Tornatore's acclaimed 1988 love letter to cinema remains a beloved fan favorite, best enjoyed on the big screen. Successful Roman film director Salvatore Di Vita (Jacques Perrin) receives news from his mother in his Sicilian hometown that Alfredo (Philippe Noiret), the town's former movie theater projectionist, has died. This prompts a flood of memories and emotions for the man who, now seen in flashback, was a father figure and mentor to the young Salvatore, and who encouraged his love of movies and the pursuit of his dreams, wherever they might lead him. Tornatore winningly evokes the world of 1950s smalltown Sicily, abetted by Ennio Morricone's masterful score, Blasco Giurato's rosy cinematography and a wonderful performance by Noiret. Winner, Best Foreign Language Film, 1990 Academy Awards®; Grand Prix, 1989 Cannes Film Festival. DIR/SCR Giuseppe Tornatore; PROD Franco Cristaldi, Giovanna Romagnoli. Italy/ France, 1988, color, 124 min. Italian with English subtitles. Rated PG

**VITA NUOVA**

*Sunday February 26th, 2:30 PM ET at the ICS Headquarters (4833 Rugby Ave. Bethesda, MD)*

Prof. Virginia Jewiss in conversation with Prof. Annelise Brody Morani presents "Vita Nuova" by Dante Alighieri, a sparkling translation that gives new life in English to Dante’s Vita Nuova, his transcendent love poems and influential statement on the art and power of poetry, and the most widely read of his works after the Inferno.

Dante was only nine years old when he first met young Beatrice in Florence. Loving her for the rest of his life with a devotion undiminished by even her untimely death, he would dedicate himself to transfiguring her, through poetry, into something far more than a muse—she would become the very proof of love as transcendent spiritual power, and the adoration of her a radiant path into a “new life.”

Censored by the Church, written in the Tuscan vernacular rather than Latin, exploring the courtly love tradition of the medieval troubadours, and employing an unprecedented hybrid form to link the thirty-one poems with prose commentary, Vita Nuova, first published in 1294, represents both an innovation in the literature of love and the work of Dante’s that brings this extraordinary poet into clearest view. This limpid new translation, based on the latest authoritative Italian edition and featuring the Italian on facing pages, captures the ineffable quality of a work that has inspired the likes of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Charles Baudelaire, T. S. Eliot, Jorge Luis Borges, Robert Penn Warren, and Louise Glück, and sustains the long afterlife of a masterpiece that is itself a key to the ultimate poetic journey into the afterlife, The Divine Comedy.

Virginia Jewiss received her PhD in Italian literature from Yale University and taught at Dartmouth, Trinity College’s Rome campus, and Yale before joining Johns Hopkins University, where she is the Associate Director of the Alexander Grass Humanities Institute. She has translated the work of numerous Italian authors and film directors, including Luigi Pirandello’s short stories, Roberto Saviano’s Gomorrah, Melania Mazzucco’s Vita and screenplays for Paolo Sorrentino, Matteo Garrone, and Gabriele Salvatores.
Anche l’ultimo workshop serale per i bambini dedicato alla Befana ed ai Re Magi è stato un successo, i tantissimi bambini hanno imparato la storia della Befana e si sono travestiti, con tanto di scopa, calza, nasone, ma soprattutto hanno assaggiato per la prima volta il carbone, sorpresa arrivata direttamente dall'Italia, scoprendo che era di zucchero! Hanno scoperto che le monetine dorate erano Euro, ma di cioccolato! Hanno mangiato la pizza, non con i “pepperoni” ma con la margherita e la pizza con il salame. Hanno disegnato i Tre Re Magi imparandone i difficili nomi: Gaspare, Melchiorre e Baldassarre. Infine abbiamo ballato, giocato ed ascoltato la lettura ad alta voce del libro “Le scarpe della Befana” e “Oro, Incenso e Mirra”. Evviva le tradizioni, evviva le emozioni, evviva lo stare insieme a scuola anche tre ore il venerdì sera. Vi aspetto per il prossimo laboratorio “Il Carnevale & le mascherine”, venerdì 10 febbraio 2023. https://italianculturalsociety.org/kids-teens/

By Fiorenza Castelli, Workshop and Summer Camp Coordinator

ABOUT POCHE PAROLE

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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.

VISIT US ONLINE AT ITALIANCULTURALSOCIETY.ORG
CIMABUE E LA MAESTÀ DI ASSISI
Di Marsha Sprague

Cimabue: La Maestà d’Assisi, Basilica Inferiore di San Francesco d’Assisi, 1285-88

Giovanni Cenni di Pepe, chiamato Cimabue, nacque nel 1240 a Firenze e morì nel 1302 a Pisa. Cimabue fu l’ultimo artista famoso del periodo bizantino che introdusse degli elementi più umani nei suoi affreschi, facendo un primo passo verso lo stile rinascimentale. Venne chiamato Cimabue (cima + bue) dovuto al suo carattere. Il soprannome viene dal verbo cimare, che in toscano antico voleva dire fronteggiare, e il sostantivo bue, ciò esprime un carattere orgoglioso e battagliero. Fu un artista prolifico e noto fra i suoi contemporanei, ma sarebbe stato superato in fama dal suo presunto allievo, Giotto, un fatto che lo lasciò rancoroso. Infatti, Dante ne scrisse nell’undicesimo canto del Purgatorio, parlando con Oderisi di Gubbio, che critica la gloria effimera degli uomini e cita l’esempio di Cimabue.

Credette Cimabue ne la pittura
tener lo campo, e ora ha Giotto il grido,
si che la fama di colui è scura.
(Purgatorio, XI Canto, 94-96)

Fra i suoi lavori, ci sono degli affreschi nella Basilica di San Francesco ad Assisi. Parlo oggi dell’affresco che si chiama La Maestà di Assisi, che si trova nella Basilica Inferiore. Misura 320 x 340 cm, e fu dipinto attorno al 1285 e 1288, prima degli affreschi nella Basilica Superiore. È famoso per contenere il primo ritratto del Santo. L’affresco è la rappresentazione in trono della Madonna con bambino, circondati da angeli con San Francesco in piedi a destra. Guardando questa foto si vede il trono ligneo, intagliato e abbellito da dorature. La Madonna guarda in tralice e sulla spalliera c’è una tenda ricamata. Maria tiene il bambino in una posizione asimmetrica, poggiando il piede destro su un gradino e quello sinistro più in alto. Il bambino stende una mano e impugna un lembo della veste della madre mentre lei gli accarezza un piede. Gli angeli, sorridendo leggermente e rivolti allo spettatore, stanno attorno al trono con le mani che sembrano accarezzarlo, le loro teste inclinate come se fossero in posa. Sono scalati su due file con diverse profondità. Non si sa se quelli più in alto stiano su un gradino invisibile oppure siano alzati da una sopranaturale levitazione.

San Francesco ha un aspetto giovanile con la chierica e un libro al petto. Mostra i segni delle stimmate sulle mani e sui piedi ed anche uno squarcio al petto. Purtroppo, le ridipinture successive impediscono la sua concreta fisionomia. Per esempio, originalmente, aveva orecchie molto grandi che sono state attenuate dalle ridipinture.

Guardando l’affresco intero, si nota il contrasto tra la rappresentazione della Maestà con quella del Santo. La Maestà è più grande, più opulenta e elegante. Il santo è sobrio, remissivo, pieno di semplicità. Nello sfondo c’è un prato verde, molto annerito per l’ossidazione del colore.

L’affresco è stato ritoccato, ridipinto, e restaurato varie volte dal quattordicesimo secolo fino ad oggi. Da questo mese è in restauro, cinquant’anni dopo l’ultimo intervento. Cura il progetto il Tecnireco (Tecnici Restauro Conservazione Beni Culturali) di Sergio Fusetti (il capo restauratore della Basilica di San Francesco) e Paolo Virilli in accordo con la Soprintendenza archeologica, belle arti e paesaggio dell’Umbria. L’azienda Ferrari finanzia il progetto.
Giovanni Cenni di Pepe, called Cimabue, was born in 1240 in Florence and died in 1302 in Pisa. Cimabue was the last famous artist of the Byzantine period who introduced more human elements in his frescoes, taking a first step towards the Renaissance style. He was called Cimabue (top + ox) due to his character. The nickname comes from the verb to trim, which in ancient Tuscan meant to face, and the noun ox, this expresses a proud and combative character. He was a prolific artist and known among his contemporaries, but he would be surpassed in fame by his alleged pupil, Giotto, a fact which left him resentful. In fact, Dante wrote about it in the eleventh song of Purgatory, speaking with Oderisi of Gubbio, who criticizes the ephemeral glory of men and cites the example of Cimabue.

"Cimabue believed in painting
hold the field, and now Giotto has the shout,
so that his fame is obscure.
(Purgatory, Canto XI, 94-96)"

Among his works are frescoes in the Basilica of San Francis in Assisi. I speak today of the fresco called La Majesty of Assisi, located in the Lower Basilica. Measures 320x340 cm, and was painted around 1285 and 1288, before the frescoes in the Upper Basilica. It is famous for containing the first portrait of the saint. The enthroned representation of the Madonna with child, surrounded by angels with St. Francis standing to the right. Looking at this photo you can see the wooden throne, carved and embellished with gilding. The Madonna looks sideways and on the back there is an embroidered curtain. Maria holds the child in an asymmetrical stance, placing the right foot up one step and the left one higher. The child extends one hand and holds a corner of her mother's dress while she strokes his foot. The angels, smiling slightly and facing the viewer, stand around the throne with hands that seem to caress it, their heads cocked as if they were posing. They are scaled in two rows with different depths. You don't know if those higher up are on an invisible step or are raised by a supernatural levitation.

San Francesco has a youthful appearance with the cleric and a book on his chest. He shows the marks of the stigmata on his hands and on feet and also a gash in the chest. Unfortunately, the successive repaints prevent the concrete physiognomy of him. For example, originally, he had very big ears, which have been toned down by repainting.

Looking at the whole fresco, one notices the contrast between the representation of the Majesty with that of the Saint. The Majesty is bigger, more opulent and elegant. The saint is sober, submissive, full of simplicity. In the background there is a green meadow, very blackened by the oxidation of the color.

The fresco was retouched, repainted, and restored several times from the fourteenth century until today. This month it is under restoration, fifty years after the last intervention, by Care the Tecnireco project (Property Conservation Restoration Technicians Culturali), Sergio Fusetti (the chief restorer of the Basilica of San Francesco), and Paolo Virilli in agreement with the archaeology Superintendence fine arts and landscape of Umbria. The Ferrari company finances the project.
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