Poche Parole
The Italian Cultural Society of Washington D.C
Preserving and Promoting Italian Culture for All
www.italianculturalsociety.org

ICS EVENTS
Social meetings start at 3:00 PM on the third Sunday of the month, September through May, at the Friendship Heights Village Center, 4433 South Park Avenue, Chevy Chase, MD (see map on the back cover).

Sunday, November 16: 1:00PM, Adults’ Movie: *Mid August Lunch (Pranzo di Ferragosto)*; 2:00PM Italian Conversation with Silvana De Luca; 3:00PM Kids’ Movie: *Le Freccia Azzurra*; 4:00PM Parmigiano Cheese Tasting with Elisabetta Bonini (at right).

Sunday, December 14: 4:00 PM (note the time) Christmas Party, Festa Di Natale. There will also be food, games, and gifts along with Babbo Natale, I Folletti & La Befana.

Joe Onofrietti accepts the well-wishes of the ICS at his last event as Hospitality Chair. Joe will be moving to Florida.

Brian Billion, one of the ICS’s scholarship winners, returns to entertain at the October social. (photos by Dennis A. Siracusa)
President’s Message

At the ICS Gala last June we played CDs of our piano scholarship winners. Brian Billion’s CD was a high point of the evening. At our October social we heard Brian LIVE, in a virtuoso performance that brought the audience to its feet and drew three encores. He had just turned 21 two days earlier. It made me think how lucky we were to hear such talent so early in his promising career.

I hope that all ICS members are aware that there are many Italian cultural experiences available here in the Washington area, starting with the Italian Cultural Institute, which is run by the Embassy of Italy. For example, last year was known as the Year of Italian Culture, but the Institute has continued numerous cultural offerings, most of them free, into 2014. See our website at http://www.italianculturalsociety.org/who-we-are/links/ to access the Institute and other local sources.

We have postponed our intended program on the Italian Automobile industry and its history instead, in the November social, we will listen to Modena native, Elisabetta Bonini, talk about the different types of Parmigiano cheese, its history, manufacture (including the cows) and consumption. You will be able to taste a selection of these cheeses.

Be sure to save the date of December 14 for the Festa Di Natale. (See page 3) Last year’s Festa was a tremendous success, particularly for the children. We hope to see you at the Festa this year and at the November social.

Arrigo Mongini

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Local Events of Interest

November 1-15-La Boheme-Kennedy Center

November 1-9—“Absolutely” by Luigi Pirendello; Constellation Theater, 1835 14th St. N.W.

November 9-6:00 Cineform Italiano: “The Get Together Dinner” “La Cena per Faroscereli Conoscere”-Casa Italiana, 595½ Third Street NW.

November 15 at Noon-Free guided tours in Italian at The National Gallery of Art. Sunday,

November 15-Florence + Venice: An Artistic Tale of Two Renaissance Cities-Smithsonian Institution

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ICS FESTA DI NATALE
Save the date, Sunday, December 14, 4 PM*

Friendship Heights Village Center  Musical Program and Children’s
Program
Free and Open to All.

ICS will provide pasta, dolci, vini, and soft drinks.
PLEASE DO NOT BRING ANY DESSERTS.
To make this Festa an enjoyable Italian experience, please bring
deliciously made Homemade Italian dishes! (enough to share for 8 others)
Last Names A thru M: meat or casseroles; N thru Z: salads or antipasti,
Note that an oven and microwave are available in the kitchen.
Sterno can be used under warming trays

Please bring your children's presents by 3:00PM wrapped and with child's name and give
them to the elves at the door for distribution by Babbo & Co.

*See detailed schedule in the December Poche Parole and look for it later on our web site

NOVEMBER 16 PROGRAM: PARMIGIANO CHEESE TASTING WITH
ELISABETTA

Modena native, Elisabetta Bonini, will talk to us about Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese
and conduct a tasting at the November 16 social meeting. She will discuss how this
famous cheese was first developed (apparently by accident), its long history, the
production process, the variations of the cheese, the types of cows used, the length
of seasoning, and which cheeses are used with which foods. She will also explain the
EU regulations governing its status under DOP (denominazione di origine protetta).
Elisabetta will discuss both the vacca rossa (red cow) and vacca bianca (white cow)
types of Parmigiano. The vacca rossa Parmigiano is considered the “mother” of
Parmigiano Reggiano.
REPORT FROM THE ITALIAN LANGUAGE PROGRAM

On Friday, October 17, our first lecture of the academic year was presented by Andrea Siotto. His lecture is on Rome and the surrounding region. Upon request, the lecture was repeated on Saturday, October 25. Everyone present was impressed by the speaker’s deep knowledge on his subject, and the interesting facts he pointed out to illustrate the main historical architectural phases that the city and the area experienced.

More lectures will be held in our biggest room in Rugby Ave., which can welcome about 32 people. In November, we may have a presentation of one of our new January classes: a Latin course, an Art class: drawing still life (in Italian and in English), and more. You will be notified soon!

Our November goal is to encourage and help the high school students who will take the SAT Subject Test in Italian. The test is given once a year, and this year it occurs on Saturday, December 6. Our teacher, who has experience with this test, is offering a preparation course on Thursday, November 6 & 20, and on December 4 or Friday, November 7, 21, and December 5.

Cooking classes have started. I was present for the first class and was really impressed with the quantity of dishes that could be prepared and how many tricks I learned in such a short time, but I was particularly impressed by the quality of the dishes cooked by the students. Enjoy some pictures of the students’ work.

Cordialmente,
Francesca Casazza, Director, ILP

Joseph Bangiolo cooks and serves the Calamarata (pasta con gamberetti e calamari). Frances Bernstein and Clare O’Callagan in the kitchen. The plates: Cocktail di Gamberi e Avogado; Risotto di Funghi.
Discover Lazio and its People

The Italian Language Program is offering Courses + Trip which is taught in eight sessions. The idea of a Course + Trip was born by listening to some of the students commenting on their trips to Italy. In the Bethesda location, students will enjoy eight classes of history, art and archaeology of Rome and its region. Starting from the Etruscan civilization and the origin of the “eternal city,” students will learn about medieval Rome and Lazio, the origin of the papacy, the Rome of the Renaissance during the Seventeenth and Eighteen Centuries. The course is taught in Italian and in English by Andrea Siotto seen with some students in the accompanying picture. For more information on ILP courses check the ICS website http://www.italianculturalsociety.org/

Discover Sicily and its People

(The following is an excerpt from a letter to our ILP director from Francesca Crull regarding her first visit to Sicily with her diabetic dog.)-editor

I am writing to thank ICS for the wonderful Discover Sicily course that you provided. I loved every minute of it, and I’ll take it again as soon as you offer it!
I loved learning so much detailed information about Sicily's history, culture, food and wine. Riccardo Cannavo' and Sabrina Munaò did an amazing job each week in class, weaving all of these elements into a cohesive picture. I can understand Sicily so much better now that I have a comprehensive understanding of the elements that made Sicily what it is today.
Since my first trip in 2008, Sicily has been one of my favorite places, and finding out about it has become my hobby. I have read a great deal about Sicily, and your course whetted my appetite for more. Riccardo was an excellent teacher, he was engaging and informative. I especially appreciated that he took time after each class to answer my innumerable questions. He was very patient and gracious. I could tell that I was listening to a real expert in the field. The material was presented in a professional manner, and Riccardo and Sabrina provided insights that you cannot get from a book.
Although I did not go on the group tour, I was lucky enough to arrange for Davide Pirrera Rossa di Cerami to lead me and two friends through a tour of Enna, Aidone and Morgantina and the magnificent Villa Casale.

From left: Francesca Casazza (ILP Director), Amy Bocella Smith, Jacqueline Siotto, Andrea Siotto, Dianne Quander and Cameron Whitman

Photo by Dennis A. Smanusca

It was a wonderful tour--both very informative and fun. The days flew by and we were so sad when it was over.

Again, kudos to ICS for getting Davide to be on your team. He has a real gift for storytelling and an incredible depth of knowledge. My friends and I come from very different walks of life--Manu runs a campground in Sicily; Silvia is a high powered executive in the telephone industry working between Washington, DC and Munich; I’m an aerospace engineer. Davide saw our differences and tailored the tour so that it was fascinating for each of us. This was no small feat—and he worked double time giving each lecture in both Italian and English. He kept his discussion moving as quickly as our interests shifted.
Brian Billion Entertains at October Social

Above: The audience rose in applause for Brian.

Raffle winners: from left: Brenda Monaco, Francesco Scaduto-Mendola, and Adele Baker.

Below: The Sunday social left people smiling.

Photos by Dennis A. Siracusa
Ciao, Joe, e Buona Fortuna

As Joe leaves the ICS to move to Florida, we extend our best wishes and deepest gratitude to him for the years of service to the board that he has given on behalf of promoting Italian in the Washington area.

Joe Onofrietti was born and raised in the Bronx, New York. After graduating from the University of Texas with a degree in Sociology, he moved to Europe for three and a half years earning a Master’s Certificate. In December of 1991, Joe returned to America accepting a job at the State Department in Washington D.C. Joe joined the Italian Cultural Society and FIERI in 2004 seeking to further or expand his knowledge of Italian history and culture. He has served as a board member for a decade and as president of Festa Italiana in 2011. Below is the statement recorded on the plaque presented to him at our October social.

The Italian Cultural Society of Washington, DC extends warm ringraziamenti and sincere appreciation to

Joseph Onofrietti

as you depart the Washington area to pursue success.

For your years of selfless service in so many capacities as an ICS board member: hospitality chair at social meetings, board secretary, management of the ICS monthly film program and writing film reviews for Poche Parole, president and entertainment manager of the Washington, DC Festa Italiana street festival and the ICS role within it, management of the ICS membership database, recruitment of new board members, provider of refreshments at board meetings, steady efforts to promote cooperation between the various local Italian societies, and many other acts of kindness to other board members and of service to the Society. Your enthusiastic willingness to undertake any effort to help promote the goals and plans of the board in support of the Society is exemplary. May your transition to Florida bring you happiness, and may you find and join an Italian-American community there worthy of the fine service you have so generously provided to us over the years.

Photos by Dennis A. Siracusa, Ron Cappelletti and Nick Monaco
On the occasion of the 450th anniversary of the birth of Galileo, the Italian Embassy and the Georgetown University Italian Research Institute organized an event focused on the theme of innovation and scientific research during the semester of the Italian Presidency of the European Union.

Dr. Carlo Rubbia is an Italian particle scientist and inventor. He was born in Gorizia, Italy. He received a degree in Physica from the scuola Normale of Pisa and in 1959 received his Ph.D. in physics from Columbia University in New York. Since 1961, he has been working at CERN (European Organization for Nuclear Research). In 1976, he suggested adapting CERN’s Super Proton Synchrotron to collide protons and antiprotons in the same ring and the world’s first antiproton factory was built.

On October 16, Dr. Rubbia, a Nobel laureate in Physics (1984), discussed to a full auditorium the advances of science since Galileo first plotted the sky with his telescope. As background, he acknowledged the groundwork laid by Aristotle, Hesiod, Empedocles, Parmenides, and Plato.

Dr. Rubbia, and the Reverend Charles Currie, S.J. the Executive Director, the Jesuit Commons who spoke on “The Ongoing Saga of Galileo” prior to Dr. Rubbia, stressed the connection between philosophy and science. While philosophy and religion have been at loggerheads with science, they do endeavor to explain the nature of the universe and man’s place in it. Both speakers agreed that science and philosophy are legitimate endeavors. Dr. Rubbia said that man’s mental engagement with nature predates civilization.

Galileo not only invented the telescope, the thermometer, the pendulum clock, and the compass but “discovered” the four moons of Jupiter and helped to postulate the heliocentric theory of the universe. He laid the groundwork for future discoveries such as plotting longitude. His telescope enlarged man’s vision and concept of the universe. He also laid the groundwork for modern experimental science, and gave mathematical formulation to many physical principles.

Dr. Rubbia did not stress Galileo’s censure by the Church for ideas against Catholic teaching, but did mention that Galileo had to fight against Aristotle’s incorrect ideas of natural philosophy upon which the Church had superimposed its view of the universe.

Dr. Rubbia was asked why Galileo accepted his censure from Pope Urban VIII in 1633. Dr. Rubbia speculated that because the pope and Galileo had been old friends and because Galileo was an old man (69), the astronomer desisted. He never recanted his beliefs and continue to explore science and mathematics until his death.-Dennis A. Siracusa
Intrigue, Sex, and Murder in Baroque Rome: Beatrice Cenci
by Luciano Mangiafico

Ravishingly beautiful in life, Beatrice Cenci, since her execution by, has been Rome’s most famous ghost. She is said to appear on the Sant’Angelo Bridge, where she met her end, holding her severed head in her hands every year on the night of September 10-11, the anniversary of her execution.

The story of Beatrice Cenci (1577-1599), with its dark cauldron of lurid sex, cruelty, intrafamily conflicts, murder, and mystery, has provided an irresistible motif and inspiration to many writers and movie directors, most of whom have imposed their vision and romantic twists upon the known historical facts.

The most accurate account of the Cenci saga to date was written by Antonio Bartoletti and published in 1879 with the title Francesco Cenci and his Family. Bartoletti wrote the book after extensive research and after the discovery of Count Francesco Cenci’s hand written memoirs Beatrice’s will, and a codicil to the will. Bertoletti solved some of the mysteries connected with Francesco Cenci’s murder and threw a more realistic light on Beatrice’s behaviour, motivation, and culpability.

Francesco Cenci (1549-1598), Beatrice’s stepfather, was a man of great wealth, a count, and the illegitimate son of a Church prelate. His dissolute life, violent temper, and persistent cruelty, although they may have been exaggerated, are legendary.

Various sources have accused him of having engaged in “unnatural sex”, having numerous mistresses while married, rapes, duels, and even some murders. It is even rumoured that he sent two of his sons to Salamanca, Spain, and when the news came back that they had died violently in brawls, he held a banquet at his Rome palace to celebrate this event. Another story has it that in 1575 he had the chapel in Palazzo Cenci (Via del Progresso, Rome, near the Jewish synagogue) remodelled for the placement of tombs of his children Giacomo and Beatrice, both of whom he was planning to murder.

Francesco’s first wife, Ersilia Santa Croce, gave him twelve children before she died. Nine years after her death, he married a widow, Lucrezia Petroni, who brought him three stepdaughters. There were no children from this marriage.

Some of his natural children, particularly the males, took after him. As we have noted, two, Rocco and Cristoforo, were killed in brawls in Spain and Giacomo, who was executed in 1599 as an accomplice in Francesco’s murder, had not only defrauded his father but in 1595 had tried to assassinate him.

Rome was then surrounded by insalubrious swamps, and during the summer malaria returned with regularity to claim numerous victims. To avoid its scourge, the wealthy decamped to villas or castles outside the city, not to return to their city until October.

Count Francesco Cenci possessed a castle dominating the small village of Petrella del Salto, in the Abruzzi Mountains, about 65 miles northeast of Rome. The castle, known as “La Rocca” (The Fortress), stood on a rocky outcrop just above the village, some of whose inhabitants were employed by the count. Cenci moved from Rome to the castle in the early summer of 1598 and kept both his wife, Lucrezia, and his daughter, Beatrice, virtually prisoners, subject to his cruel treatment and to his compulsive paranoid jealousy.

As it came out in the testimony of a female servant during the murder trial in 1599, Francesco Cenci apparently suffered from a form of mange and frequently demanded that Beatrice scrape his skin, including his testicles, with a damp cloth. Sometimes, she also testified, he even asked Beatrice to hold the urinal and chamber pot while he relieved himself. Another former servant also testified that Beatrice had told her that during the Christmas season of 1597 the count had gone to her bedroom and, despite her protests, “had come into her bed.” (continua nel prossimo numero)

Guido Reni draws Beatrice Cenci in Prison
When Santa’s helper La Befana falls ill and must take off a Christmas Eve, she recruits Scarafoni to help deliver all the toys. No one but the toys knows that Scarafoni plans to auction off the toys to the highest bidder, which means the toys won’t make it to the children who have been good all year and deserve them. The toys decide to deliver themselves, and the story follows them as they struggle to avoid the heartless Scarafoni and to find their true homes. Meanwhile, a young boy named Francesco tries to find his true Christmas present - one special friend. In the end, the toys deliver themselves, but Scarafoni still has the money. However, everyone rushes to the toy shop and finds Scarafoni with the money and manage to get it back from him as Scarafoni is sent to prison. Francesco gets his true friend - a new puppy.

**Adults’ Movie of the Month
Pranzo di Ferragosto**

As the Italian holiday of Pranzo di Ferragosto approaches, cash-strapped Gianni (Gianni DiGregorio) gets help from his landlord, his friend and his doctor, who offer financial relief in exchange for Gianni looking after their elderly relatives over the holiday. Four mismatched Italian mamas at the same table make for an awkward, hilarious and touching mid-August lunch in this film festival favorite from Di Gregorio, who also writes and directs.
Antenna Italia is now on the AMICO website. Get news from Italy and information on Italian and Italian-American events as well as music & commentary in streaming audio. Log on any time at Pino Cicala’s web site: www.italianamericancommunications.org

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