SOCIAL MEETINGS/EVENT OVERVIEW

NOVEMBER SOCIAL EVENT: INAUGURATION OF THE NEW ITALIAN CULTURAL SOCIETY-ITALIAN LANGUAGE PROGRAM HEADQUARTERS at 4833 Rugby Ave., Suite 201, Bethesda, MD 20814, November 19th, 4:00-6:00pm and November 20th, 6:00-8:00pm

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

I am pleased that the membership has approved the new Bylaws that reflect various changes in the structure and function of the Italian Cultural Society. Our Society no longer has the previous separation between the Ente Gestore Status, that indicated its strong connection and dependence on the Embassy of Italy and a Society that organizes scholarship awards and monthly cultural meetings. Though we continue to collaborate with our Embassy, the ILP is an independent entity without financial ties to it. The ICS resorts to its own means to grow and establish itself through our students, sponsors, members of the Board and of the Society. The newly-created position of Executive Director reflects this independent status. The Executive Director manages the daily tasks and goals of the Society with the focus to develop the Italian Language Program, the cultural events, the scholarship awards and other programs. The ED is responsible for the budget and the strategic marketing and communication plan, overseen by the Board of Directors and its President. Francesca Casazza has been approved as our first Executive Director after a four years period during which she has demonstrated her abilities as Director of our Italian Language Program. During this time she has enhanced the ILP by a considerable increase in the number of courses, and of the students, she has also served as a catalyst for an increase in the number of Society members through collaborations with other local Italian and Italian-American associations. This growth has also created the need for a larger physical facility to host our programs. After a year of search and a careful analysis of the needs for the interior space, through Francesca’s efforts and the efforts of some of the teachers and some Board members, in particular the involvement of Chiara Gastaldi, the Society and its ILP has a new venue. We are now happy to invite the members of the ICS, the students and our friends to the inauguration of the new facilities. The event will replace the social meeting for the month of November. Details on page 3.

Luigi M. De Luca
President
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WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS
SINGLE:
Alan Miller
Debra Karlin

FAMILY:
Rudolph D’Alessandro and family
Tony Persico and family

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NOVEMBER SOCIAL EVENT: INAUGURATION OF THE NEW HEADQUARTERS

Two days to celebrate with us: Sunday Nov. 19th and Monday Nov. 20th!

Inauguration & Open House
November 19, 4-6PM & November 20, 6-8PM
4833 Rugby Ave., Suite #201 / Bethesda, MD 20814
www.italianculturalsociety.org

Sunday, November 19th, 4-6PM
4:00 Welcoming of guests
4:30 Presentation of the ICS and its programs
4:45 Official Toast
5:00 Information session on courses with our instructors

Aperitivo italiano with Spritz, Prosecco, wine and food will be served.

INFO&RSVP or visit our website

Monday, November 20th, 6-8PM
6:00 Welcoming of guests
6:30 Opening Remarks by Representatives of the Embassy of Italy
6:45 Presentation of the ICS and its programs
7:00 Official Toast
7:05 Information Session on courses with our instructors

Aperitivo italiano with Spritz, Prosecco, wine and food will be served.

INFO&RSVP or visit our website
OCTOBER SOCIAL EVENT
10/22/17

Our social of October 22 was generously hosted by Luigi Diotaiuti, a master-chef from the region of Lucania-Basilicata, in Southern Italy. He received us at his newly-opened restaurant Aperto, 2013 I Street NW Washington DC. Luigi explained that he gave it this name to indicate that the restaurant will receive you with open arms. About 70 people attended the event. Aperto has spacious rooms and a great kitchen. Luigi was rightly proud of his new restaurant that joins his other restaurant, Tiramisu’ on P street, in the tradition of offering culinary delights, many of them from Luigi’s region of Basilicata. This region is the place of birth of the famous Roman poet Horace, and its cultural background relay back to the fame of the Magna Graecia.

Luigi has been supporting the Italian community of Washington DC by generously offering his delights on several occasions including the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Italian Cultural Society at the Embassy of Italy, when some 450 people were in attendance.

Luigi explained with enthusiasm and obvious expertise the history of pasta and had three young ladies working with him to make some of the kinds (filature) of pasta that he also had on display: Orecchiette, and fusilli, typical of Lucania and Puglie, as well as cavatelli, mezzelune, strozzareti, manate, cortece, culirgionis, ravioli, trofie and laganelle. After a detailed introduction and an extolment of the art of making things at home, Luigi gave the signal to cook some of the types of pasta and his collaborators proceeded with this task and with serving the pasta. We sampled trofie al pesto, laganelle in lamb ragù and ravioli with burrata. Needless to say the flavor and the taste of all these pasta dishes were very much to the liking of our members and all enthusiastically applauded Luigi and his effort and generosity. Thank you, dear Luigi, and we hope we may visit your establishment soon and perhaps we may call on you for help in our other functions.

Luigi M. De Luca
FROM THE ILP

Fourteen more classes just opened for Session 2, during the last week of October. We look forward to starting Carlo Ellena’s Course + Trip – Discover Liguria, Piemonte and Veneto – Slow Food and Wine – a five week course – on Tuesday nights, taught in English and in Italian. We will also soon offer Cooking classes and Workshops for kids and adults. After the end of this session, we will organize again extra classes, on a drop-in basis, for students who want to review until Christmas vacation.

October has been an important month for us, because of the week of the Italian language, October 16th-23rd. It was a pleasure to participate in the numerous events planned for this week at the Embassy, and especially at the Conferences at Georgetown University “Innovation in Italian Programs and Pedagogy.”

On November 3rd, Cristiana Fabiani and I will present the ICS and the Language Program at the Marriot Wardman Park Hotel, on occasion of the NIAF 42nd Gala Weekend. After that, we will put the finishing touches on the organization of the new headquarters and we will be ready to celebrate with many of you on November 19th and 20th! Don’t miss it!

Francesca Casazza
Executive Director

More pictures from the October Social Meeting
On Friday October 20, 2017, I attended a Symposium on “The Course of Empires”, sponsored by the Embassy of Italy, the Italian Cultural Institute, and held at the Smithsonian American Art Museum. The symposium examined the “persistent fascination of American and Italian artists with the cultural achievements of ancient Rome and the Renaissance”. Italian culture, like many others, is the derivative of a variety of inputs. Of these one of the most impactful has been the Greek colonization of Southern Italy, once called Magna Graecia. It is from this very region of Italy, once with a flourishing economy, architecture and scholarship, that a sizable portion of the Italian population now residing in the USA has come, mainly because of poor economic conditions, especially in Sicily, Campania and Calabria at the beginning of the 20th century. And this was also covered at the Symposium together with the Fascism phenomenon and the abject post-war economic conditions.

It is also obvious here as for other regions of the Mediterranean that history has revolved around cycles of economic and cultural excellence and eventual poverty, over long periods of time as occurred in Sicily in particular with the riches of 2,500 years ago and the economic disrepair of the early 1900s. I stated this in my comments in a discussion group at the conference. The reaction was that in ancient Sicily it was the Greeks that were responsible for the flourishing economy and art of 2400 years ago and not the “Sicilians”. I suggested that people like the famous rhetor Gorgias and the mathematician Archimedes and the philosopher Empedocles were indeed Sicilians as they were born and raised in Sicily. But my opponent was undaunted and maintained that these were Greeks and not Sicilians. I then mentioned that nearly one half of the poetry of the Greek poet Pindar would not have been written had it not been for the sponsorship of the Southern Italian city tyrants, Hieron of Siracuse and Anaxilas of Rhegium under whose support Pindar wrote many of his odes."

Luigi M. De Luca

VENICE

“Qualcuno ci vive?” è una domanda comune. Per molti visitatori Venezia sembra un parco Disneyland o Las Vegas Bellagio, ricca di finti palazzi e canali artificiali, lungo i quali si muovono i gondolieri, che cantano guidando le loro gondole perfettamente disegnate e verniciate. Se si aggiunge, poi, il migliaio di turisti che passeggiano sui ponti dei canali e lungo strette strade su cui si affacciano bar e negozi, si potrebbe erroneamente scambiare Venezia per un parco a tema. Al contrario, Venezia è una città reale, nella quale vive una popolazione in decrescita. Lungo la storia, diverse volte Venezia ha raggiunto una popolazione di 150,000 abitanti, ad esempio, a metà del XVI secolo o nel 1930, quando diventò un posto alla moda per artisti e intellettuali. La popolazione diminuì con la seconda guerra mondiale, arrivando a 50,000 abitanti, lasciando Venezia ai turisti che or ora sovrappopolano la città. Le costruzioni sono reali, non facciate. Venezia era la connessione commerciale con l’Est quando il Nuovo mondo non si era ancora iniziato a concentrare sull’Ovest, si trattava di una Repubblica governata da un consiglio eletto e da un Doge. È a Venezia che si inizia a parlare di “ghetto”, facendo riferimento al suo quartiere ebraico ed è qui che troviamo l’ambientazione del famoso Mercante di Venezia shekesperiano.

I then proposed that he consider the following. Would he consider Thomas Jefferson British or American? For indeed Jefferson was of English and possibly Welsh descent and was born a British subject. At this he relented not without admitting that he had never thought about it in these terms. We should be proud of our Greek descent but also be aware of the contribution of the local element to the cultural achievements of Southern Italy, and consider that the Sicilian Language was of fundamental importance in southern Italy and would have captured the entirety of the peninsula had it not been for Dante and his writings.

Luigi M. De Luca

“Does anyone live here?”

It’s a common question. To many visitors, Venice seems like a Disney park or the Las Vegas Bellagio, filled with fake palazzi and artificially constructed canali along with singing gondolieri rowing highly-designed and painted cardboard gondolas. Add thousands of tourists strolling over canal bridges and along narrow streets lined with gift shops and cafes, and you might mistake Venice for a theme park. But Venice is a real city where a declining population lives. At several times in its history, Venice had a population of 150,000 --in the middle 16th century and as late as the 1930’s, when it was the fashionable place to be for artists and intellectuals. But since World War II, the population has declined to 50,000 leaving Venice to the tourists who now have overtaken the city. The buildings are real and not facades. Venice was the connecting point for trade with the East well before the New World started to focus on the West. It was a Republic ruled by an elected council and doge; a Jewish quarter that invented the name ghetto and gave us the story for Shakespeare’s Merchant of Venice;
Poche Parole

PRESERVING AND PROMOTING
ITALIAN LANGUAGE
AND CULTURE

The home of Titian, Casanova, and the architect Palladio; a twentieth century mecca for artists and collectors like Peggy Guggenheim; the home of Murano, the epitome of hand-crafted glass.

Our four days in Venice.
The travel agency recommended by the Italian Language Program, www.italianculturalsociety.org/coursestrips/, FANDANGO, found an apartment away from the tourist sites and planned a few tours for us. FANDANGO specializes in customized tours so we crafted our stay together. Our apartment was in Campo Santa Margarita, one of the few residential neighborhoods remaining in the city. At four o’clock children descend upon the piazza when school lets out. The sound of children playing below our balcony assured us that we were not among tourists. At night, the piazza was filled with outdoor cafes where the students from the nearby university gather.

Venice is a walking city, or should we say a “boating” community and is not that large. Every day we headed out in a different direction. Our first tour was to the Doge Palace, but instead of the standard tour, we took the “secret tour” which took us from the lowest most cells in the prison through the better-appointed cell of Casanova, and up into the attic where the weapons were stored.

Another day we made a point to find the Teatro La Fenice, where we had tickets to see Madame Butterfly the next night. The theatre occupies an entire Venetian block, with water on all sides, which means we had to circle the entire building to find the front. It was a good thing that we previewed the location of the building as we might have been late to the opera otherwise.

We walked to the historically Jewish part of town -- original Ghetto. Venetian authorities compelled the city’s Jews to live in the quarter, which was established in 1516. The area was called ‘geto,’ by the Italians, which means foundry. The current pronunciation and spelling we now know comes from the Yiddish treatment of the word. We spent some time in the Jewish Museum which also housed two of the four synagogues around the piazza, or campo, as all piazza’s in Venice are called.

(to be continued)
Jackson & Ellen Coppley
Un altro giorno ci siamo diretti verso il Teatro La Fenice, dove la sera successiva abbiamo potuto ammirare Madame Butterfly. Il Teatro occupa un intero blocco veneziano, che si affaccia sull'acqua in entrambi i lati, il che significa che per trovare la facciata abbiamo dovuto fare il giro dell'intero palazzo. Per fortuna lo abbiamo scoperto in anticipo, il giro intorno al Palazzo ci avrebbe fatto perdere l'opera la sera successiva!

(continua)

Jackson & Ellen Coppley

**LOCAL EVENTS OF INTEREST**

Please visit our web page http://www.italianculturalsociety.org/upcoming-events/

Also, check THE ITALIAN CULTURAL INSTITUTE’S calendar (Istituto Italiano di Cultura (IIC), which links to specific events and exhibits: http://www.iicwashington.esteri.it/iic_washington/it

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Please send submissions to: language@italianculturalsociety.org or on a computer CD/DVD to: Editor, Poche Parole, 4833 Rugby Ave., Suite 201, Bethesda, MD 20814

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