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ITALIAN LANGUAGE
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SOCIAL MEETINGS/EVENT OVERVIEW

JANUARY SOCIAL MEETING: Jan. 21st, 2018 at 3:00pm at the ICS headquarters, 4833 Rugby Ave., Suite 201, Bethesda, MD 20814
“A Midsummer’s Night Dream: Gravitational Waves and Light Strike Cosmic Gold” by Dr. Eleonora Troja.

JANUARY LECTURE: Jan. 18th at 7:00pm at the ICS headquarters - Prof. Laura Benedetti presents her recent novels (in Italian).



PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

First of all I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Executive Director Francesca Casazza and all the members of the Board and their families for putting together a memorable and very exciting Christmas party. Some 160 people were in attendance and the occasion was graced by the presence of Babbo Natale and the Befana with 6 elves, indeed a treat for our children and grandchildren. After the excitement of our Christmas party (see pertinent article in this issue of Poche Parole), we look forward to the January Social, which will take place on Sunday January 21 at the ICS headquarters. The speaker is Dr. Eleonora Troja, the 2017 winner of the Italian Young Scientist award of the ICS. She works at NASA and is at the cutting edge of her field. She will be speaking on the subject of “A Midsummer’s Night Dream: Gravitational Waves and Light Strike Cosmic Gold”. We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible on that occasion. Happy New Year!

Luigi M. De Luca
President ICS

Admiring Luigi's historical Presepe





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WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

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DECEMBER SOCIAL EVENT: FESTA DI NATALE

12/17/17

On Sunday, December 17 we had our Christmas party at the Chevy Chase Village Hall. The members of the Board of the ICS and Le D.I.V.E. did their best to make sure the party was a wonderful occasion for all to enjoy. And everyone, from little children to teenagers to their parents and grandparents, did in fact have a great time. Our Board members made everything work like a well-oiled machine. Two Christmas trees adorned the halls, a “presepe” with baby Jesus was reassembled on site, with the three kings bearing gifts, and a host of villagers in ancient costumes represented by little antique Italian-made papier-mâché statues, which populated the imaginary landscape. The “kitchen crew” made sure that the food, mainly brought by the attendees but also donated by the Embassy of Italy (Panettone Tre Marie and Ferrero products), was warm and elegantly displayed; the elves collected the gifts which Santa and La Befana distributed to some 60 children attending the event with some 110 adults. It was the job of Fiorenza Castelli, Le DIVE’s board member, to make sure that the kids were entertained before Santa and his crew arrived. Our awardee, Danila Tomassetti, a pianist from Catholic University of America performed wonderful pieces to the delight of adults and children alike. Without Riccardo and Sabrina Cannavo’ the Santa and Befana collaboration would not have been possible. Most appreciated was the presence of the Minister of the Embassy of Italy, Catherine Flumiani, who helped us in many ways reach our goal. The children performed in Italian through singing and reciting poetry: they were wonderful and a joy to watch and listen to. Our thanks go to their teachers of Italian. Finally, the traditional Christmas raffle included our generous donors’ gifts (Eyma Salon, Pizzeria da Marco, Santa Maria Novella, Campari and photographer David Cieslikowski). Enjoy the pictures below and on the following page.

Luigi M. De Luca & Francesca Casazza





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More pictures on our [website](#) and on [Facebook](#)





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JANUARY SOCIAL EVENT

1/21/18

A Midsummer's Night Dream: Gravitational Waves and Light Strike Cosmic Gold

It is our very good fortune to have Dr. Eleonora Troja, our 2017 ICS Young Scientist awardee, to tell us about her work at our Sunday, January 21st Social meeting. The remarkable observation of gravitational waves by LIGO and VIRGO is at the very edge of important topics in physics, indeed, of our ancient human quest to understand the universe, and is the subject of the Nobel prize in physics awarded this year to Caltech's Profs. Barish and Thorne, and MIT's Prof. Weiss. Dr. Troja's work, using different methods, is related to this quest.

Eleonora Troja, educated in Sicily, is currently an Associate Research Scientist in the Department of Astronomy at the University of Maryland, and works primarily at NASA Goddard Space Flight Center in the Astrophysics Science Division.

Her research interests lie in astronomy, and include the study of gamma-ray bursts (GRBs) and exotic transients such as kilo-novae and tidal disruption events. In her career she has worked on a variety of different aspects of the GRB phenomenon, although her primary focus is the connection between short duration GRBs, neutron star mergers, and gravitational wave sources.

Her main interest is to investigate the observational signatures of compact mergers, systems composed of either two neutron stars (NS-NS) or a neutron star and a black hole (NS-BH) which slowly spiral into each other and eventually collide due to energy losses to gravitational radiation. Compact binary mergers lie at the intersection of several key aspects of modern astrophysics:

- they are the most likely cause of short duration gamma-ray bursts;
- they are strong sources of gravitational wave radiation, and prime candidates for direct detection with advanced LIGO and Virgo;
- they are the most promising r-process sites (rapid absorption of neutrons) for the formation of all the heavy elements (i.e. gold, platinum, uranium, ...) found on Earth.

These three fundamental areas of investigation are at the core of her research.

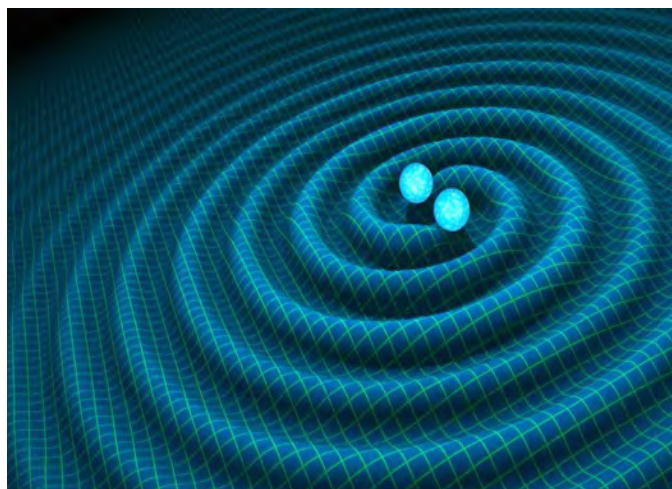
We have a rare opportunity to hear first-hand about these interesting topics by an exciting, young Italian scientist.

Please come! RSVP at RSVP@italianculturalsociety.org

For more information and reservations, visit <http://www.italianculturalsociety.org/get-involved/social-meetings>



Eleonora Troja. Swift Guest Investigator Lead, NASA/GSFC
Co-Chair of MGW5.6 "Targets of Opportunity"





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FROM THE ILP

Questo mese, scrivo in italiano, visto che invece degli articoli nelle due lingue degli studenti e/o membri ICS, vi proponiamo un articolo del nostro Presidente, che riporta un po' di storia sulla nostra associazione.

A gennaio, di solito, vi aggiorno sull'andamento dell'anno e sono lieta di annunciare che, anche quest'anno, il numero di iscrizioni è aumentato: 1291, contro i 1188 del 2016. 8,7% di crescita! Abbiamo aperto 178 corsi durante i 4 *term* dell'anno, contro i 154 dell'anno scorso. È un piacere ed un onore vedere che sempre più persone si interessino alla nostra cultura e alla nostra lingua.

Colgo l'occasione per ringraziare tutti gli insegnanti che trasmettono passione e competenze e rendono l'ICS-ILP un ambiente positivo e stimolante, un luogo d'incontro dove ci si arricchisce intellettualmente e spiritualmente. Ora, nella nuova sede, abbiamo più spazio per accogliere più studenti, organizzare i social meeting mensili e lecture infrasettimanali. Cominceremo infatti giovedì 18 gennaio, con la presentazione dei romanzi della Prof. Laura Benedetti (pagina 9).

Lo scorso dicembre, alcuni studenti hanno usufruito delle lezioni extra "drop-ins", inclusi i più giovani, che hanno concluso i corsi d'autunno recitando poesie alla nostra Ambasciata, in occasione dell'evento "L'inverno e le feste in famiglia: leggiamo insieme!" organizzato dall'Ufficio Scuola (Prof. M Fusco) e dal Min. C. Flumiani. (Vedi foto). Hanno infine cantato e recitato durante la festa di Natale.

Tra le novità del *Winter Term* che stiamo per cominciare, la Prof. Maria Laura Seguiti insegnerà il corso *Italy in the European Union*, in italiano le prime 5 settimane, ed in inglese le successive. *Cooking Classes* riprenderanno con tre nuove insegnanti (Simonetta Baldassarri, Viviana Di Scullo e Amelia Gotti), in nuove location a Chevy Chase, a Potomac, o a casa vostra!

Avremo due livelli di corso di Latino (per adolescenti+adulti) tra cui uno elementare: siete quindi in tempo per rispolverare le vostre conoscenze scolastiche, o intraprendere questa avventura alla scoperta delle nostre origini linguistiche per la prima volta!

I corsi per i bambini sono suddivisi in numerosi livelli, di gruppi piccoli, per poter adeguare alle specifiche esigenze un syllabus focalizzato sulla comunicazione, specialmente orale, e sugli aspetti storico-culturali fondamentali, a seconda dell'età. La domenica mattina ospitiamo infine il corso in Italiano di *Music Together*, per bambini da 0 a 5 anni, con i loro genitori e/o nonni.

Visitate il nostro sito con il programma e il calendario dei corsi, e le nostre proposte viaggio, interessanti anche per gli italiani: i nostri contatti locali offrono infatti, nella loro regione, un'esperienza singolare e personalizzata, che va ben al di là del tradizionale viaggio organizzato.

Auguri di cuore per
un nuovo anno
sereno e in salute!

Francesca Casazza
Executive Director



Davide reciting 'Un dono speciale'



Intermediate level children reciting
'Lo Zampagnaro'



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HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE ITALIAN CULTURAL SOCIETY (1)

In early September 2002 I visited the house of Maria Di Francesco (5121 Manning Drive, Bethesda, MD 20814). Mrs. Di Francesco had been indicated to me as a possible good source of information about the background history of the Italian Cultural Society. She promised she would write her recollections and indeed not much later I received the following letter.

“Dear Mr. De Luca,

September 17, 2002

My husband corrected me on the title of the original Italian Cultural Society-it was “ Il Circolo di Cultura Italiana”. Mr. Ralph Urciolo, we agreed, was the 1st President. He was teaching Italian in the night classes of the public schools and, we believe, met with groups of his students in their homes for conversation and studies. It must have been around 1938 when Evelina Pacini also working at the Italian Embassy told me there was to be a meeting of an Italian Club right around the corner from me, -1 st and 13 Street SE (see correction by Mrs. Di Francesco below), on Capitol Hill. It was my husband’s three sisters, students of Mr. Urciolo, who were hosting this meeting of the Italian class. This continued for several years. All the while the professor was continuing his studies, getting a Ph.D. and a law degree at Catholic University. Later he opened a very flourishing real estate office and the next phase of the “club” took place. A Professor Mario Maiolatesi and his wife Maria led the larger group of young American-Italians. My recollection of this period was that the meetings were held at the Arts Club , a beautiful palazzo on L street off of Connecticut Avenue. Professore Maiolatesi, also a lawyer, used a very fine educational method-he had us doing research and then we the students read our homework to the class. We gained a great deal of knowledge of the culture and language of Italy. Since all were young people-government workers and students at local universities-many picnics, dances, and outings were also on the agenda. Of course, during the World War II era, the Circolo di Cultura Italiana “disbanded” as did the literary Dante Alighieri Society in Washington and elsewhere.

Years following this period I cannot account for since I had married Dr. Vincent Di Francesco and were busy with his medical practice and raising our children. I will say this, that quite often I was called downstairs (the office was in our home) to help with a patient who was an Italian war bride. When the next phase of the Culture Society came about I do not know. I continued my membership as I knew of it and have since always enjoyed the contact with people of our heritage as well as the language. I do not know of any other members of the early years except Evelyn (Pacini) Sardo and her brother who lives in Detroit.

It may be that Elio Grandi knows something of the families of the professors and of the students since he has been in contact with many Italian-American families. Holy Rosary Church may also be another source.

A program that I would like to see repeated at some meetings of our present Culture (sic)



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Society: about 10-15 years ago a professor of history, I believe at George Washington University, gave a slide lecture about the influence of Italian art and architecture on the buildings and institutions in Washington DC. What a tremendous amount –the Capitol, Library of Congress, Saint Alban Cathedral, National geographic, the Mansions on Connecticut Avenue, etc. etc. I wish I could tell you his name (an American) or where another such program could be found. How proud we should feel to realize this great gift our Italian artisans provided for us.

My best wishes, may we continue ad multos annos.

Maria (Mary) Di Francesco”

In a subsequent hand-written letter dated September 30, 2002, Mrs. Di Francesco writes:

“ Mr De Luca- Another correction must be made in my note to you. In the middle of the first paragraph I mentioned “There was to be a meeting of the Italian club at 1st and B Street SE, not 13th. That street is now Independence Avenue, where the Madison Library now stands. Vincent’s father had his shop on the street floor and the family lived in the upper 3 stories of the building , first block from the Capitol. Mrs. Bardo should be back from a trip to Italy and she may have other comments to make on the Circolo. Her phone number is

Names of members of the Circolo that come to mind:

Florence Sari and her brother. Florence married Ralph Urciolo. Their daughter Dr. Constance Battle? the Hospital for Sick Children.

Elsie and Joe Roll – lived in Forestville , MD. Joe’s family was in local politics also related to the Aluisi family. Joseph Weeda (Guida) – married a Helen....also a member.

Benjamin Cottone, lawyer for the Securities and Exchange Commission 2 Facchina brothers who lived in Brookland-family in construction-you have seen the name on the trucks working on the tremendous construction on Old Georgetown Road and 270.

Jenny Peluso

Mrs. Costantino

etc etc

Mary Di Francesco”

Luigi M. De Luca, President



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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

Our first lecture of 2018, organized in collaboration with Italians in DC - ParoLab is a book presentation. The book is in Italian, therefore **the conversation will be in Italian**:



Laura Benedetti,
Professor at Georgetown University
presenta il suo ultimo libro "Secondo Piano"

in conversazione con Lucia Wolf,

Reference Librarian Specialist European Division-Library of Congress



giovedì 18 gennaio 2018
alle 7:00pm

presso la sede dell'ICS
4833 Rugby Ave. Suite 201
Bethesda, MD 20814



Ulteriori informazioni su <http://www.italianculturalsociety.org/upcoming-events/>

Lo spazio è limitato! RSVP a RSVP@italianculturalsociety.org, o 301-215-7885.

Special thanks to Lucy Fonseca, ICS-ILP Office Manager, for the final editing and layout of Poche Parole.

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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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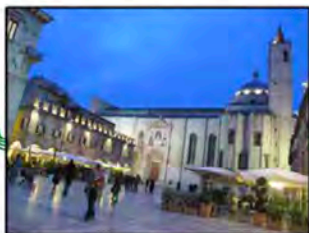
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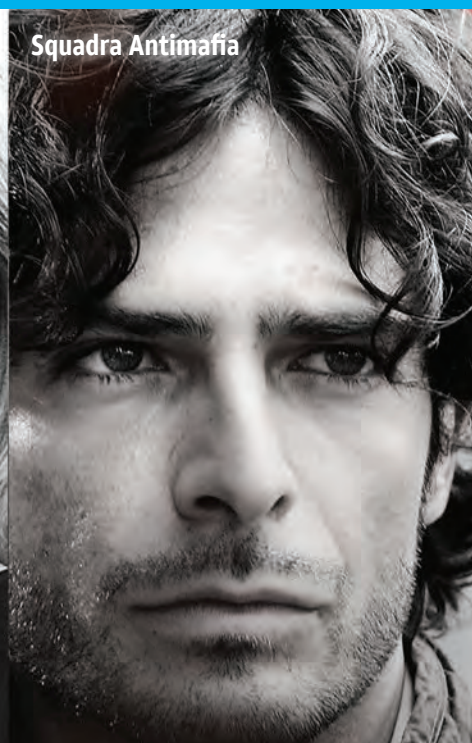
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