Our Festa di Natale had more than 230 attendees and of these one third were children, who, guided by our teacher Fiorenza Castelli, recited and sang to the delight of their parents and all present. They were a true joy to watch as they showed enthusiasm, wonderful performative abilities, and curiosity for all that surrounded them. I was engaged by some of them to show them how to build a Presepe and I will be more than happy to do it before next Christmas. The musical performance by one of the recipients of the Luciana Mendola Montanari award, Dominick D’Alessandro, showed his prowess and ability to cover a large musical performative range, from Chopin, to Beethoven to more recent composers. Naturally, all of this does not happen by miracle, but it is the result of the dedication and effort by the staff at our ICS, in collaboration with Le D.I.V.E. and MaPaCi Italians in DC. If the collaboration gives wonderful results, it is also true that the ICS needs the support of the members at large. I therefore take this occasion to encourage all of you to become members of the ICS, to donate towards the accomplishments of our goals and in the end to support our efforts towards achieving a lasting awareness of our Italian culture, pride in the history and accomplishments of our people. Our next event will take place on Sunday, January 20 at 3:00 P.M. at the ICS headquarters – 4833 Rugby Ave. Suite 201, Bethesda, MD 20814. Dr. Gianni Cicali, Professor at Georgetown University, will be speaking on “The Grand Tour and the birth of the myth of Italy”. The talk will explore the interesting case of touristic dramaturgy that contributed to the birth of the Italian myth in the past centuries. I hope to see many of you at this event. Let me wish you and your families Best Wishes for a Happy Holiday Season from our ICS Family.

Luigi M. De Luca, President ICS

Santa’s traditional visit
WELCOME NEW MEMBERS
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Couple/Family: Lindsay Lincoln and family, Deborah Buckley and family, Steve Williams and family, Michael Young and family, Wendy & Salvatore Benvenga and family

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LA FESTA DI NATALE: A CELEBRATION OF JOY

Our traditional Festa di Natale began with an exquisite piano recital performed by Dominick Cristofori D’Alessandro, a piano major at Catholic University and recipient of the ICS 2018 Luciana Montanari-Mendola Award. The audience was treated to a fabulous selection of musical classics including a Bach Suite, a Chopin Nocturne, a Debussy prelude and a Beethoven concerto.

Our program also included various recitations in Italian provided by our very talented, young students, who also sang Girotondo di Natale. The entire audience belted out a joyous rendition of Here comes Santa before the arrival of Babbo Natale, la Befana and the Elves who delivered presents to the children.

Le D.I.V.E., MaPaCi Italians in D.C. provided arts and crafts activities for the children and Music Together Vivo in Italian gave a sample class, both of which offered an informal opportunity for our children to speak in Italian.

Luigi De Luca set up an exquisite presepe and many pieces were from his own childhood. The scale of the presepe and its rolling landscape seemed to mirror the magnitude and magic of the very first Christmas. Exquisite figurines – some clad in the luxurious garments of sovereigns, others in a shepherd’s humble tunic – formed a procession leading to the manger. A brilliant star twinkled in the twilight.
In keeping with Italian tradition, the event included a feast of home-cooked dishes, classic Panettone provided by Balducci’s, holiday cookies, prosecco and spritz provided by Campari.

**Framore**, a family owned business that has been producing pasta and other traditional products in Italy since 1929, provided organic pasta and goods, including a variety of tomato sauce, olives and artichokes. Guests were invited to make a suitable donation and take Framore products for use at home. One hundred percent of the donation proceeds went to ICS.

The lucky winners of our lavish raffle walked away with luxurious prizes including a gift certificate from **EYMA Salon & Spa** and Pizzeria Da Marco, an ICS Italian course, a photo by ICS Board Member, David Cieslikowski, and a painting by Ron Tate, a tris of **Campari** liquors, and a panettone from **Balducci**, who offered all the panettoni for the Festa.

The magic of the season is reflected in our sense of community and enjoyment of Italian language, culture and traditions.

*Jenna Lordo, Assistant to the Executive Director*
JANUARY SOCIAL EVENT

“THE GRAND TOUR AND THE BIRTH OF THE MYTH OF ITALY” by Prof. Gianni Cicali

Sunday, January 20 at 3:00 P.M. at the ICS Headquarters, 4833 Rugby Ave. Suite 201, Bethesda, MD 20814

Through the lens of travel and the Grand Tour, we will explore the interesting case of touristic dramaturgy that contributed to the birth of the Italian myth in the past centuries. European aristocrats, and intellectuals visited Italy as an essential part for their education. The Grand Tour to Italy also represented a necessary status symbol. By following the words of an English lady of the Grand Tour who witnessed shows, court rituals, and who visited museums and churches, we will see the dawn of a new phenomenon that saw the light of day in 18th-century and that involved Italian theater: theater for tourism. In the 18th-century a new public and a new way of producing and exporting theatre also led to an increasing migration of Italian theater and opera professionals (including architects and music composers) that exported and disseminated the Italian tradition in Europe. The patterns of representation of Italy will travel to a new form of art, cinema, and will represent a bridge between the era of the Grand tour, and 20th- and 21st-century Italian cinema, with movies such as La Dolce Vita that can be defined as a Grand Tour for contemporary times, modern Italy and the jet society of the Sixties.

Gianni Cicali (Florence, Italy) is associate professor of Italian Theater (Dept. of Italian, Georgetown University). Cicali is a specialist in History of Italian Theater (Renaissance, Baroque and 18th-century). He holds doctoral degrees from both Italy (Università di Firenze) and Canada (University of Toronto). He is author of a book on the Italian “Opera buffa” based on textual and archive research (Attori e ruoli nell’opera buffa italiana del Settecento, 2005). He is also author L’Inventio crucis nel teatro rinascimentale Fiorentino (2012). He edited a book in 2015 “Teatro italiano fra testo performance e scena”, special issue of Quaderni d’Italianistica. He has published several articles on International journals and was invited by De Paul University, Bryn Mawr College, Università di Firenze, Università di Bergamo, Università Federico II of Naples, Università di Bari, University of Toronto, Italian Embassy in the US, and other institutions for lectures. Gianni Cicali has been Editor of Quaderni d’italianistica (journal of the Canadian Society for Italian Studies - CSIS) from 2011 to 2015, and he is a member of several Advisory and Editorial Boards of International academic journals.
FROM THE ITALIAN LANGUAGE PROGRAM

Questo mese, scrivo in italiano, per motivare ulteriormente i nostri studenti, e non solo, a venire ad imparare la bella lingua, qualora fosse necessario! A gennaio, di solito, vi aggiorno sull’andamento dell’anno e sono lieta di annunciare che, anche quest’anno scolastico 2017/2018, il numero di iscrizioni è aumentato: 1338, contro i 1291 del 2016/17. Abbiamo aperto 185 corsi durante i 4 termine dell’anno, contro i 178 dell’anno scorso (+ 5 settimane di summer camps entrambi gli anni). 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 fare un’esperienza con il nostro sito online!

Tra le novità del Winter Term che stiamo per cominciare, la Prof. Annelise Brody Morani, insegnerà un corso su Petrarcha e Boccaccio (dopo il successo del corso su Dante), Storia della letteratura, Storia dell’arte e ... Yoga in italiano! Prof. Valentina Asciutti e Silvana De Luca vi introdurranno alla storia romana e al cinema; Camilla Presti al periodo del Regno delle due Sicilie. Con Prof. Sabina Di Maio potrete discutere le notizie del giorno, mentre con Antonella Salvatore e Cristiana Fabiani potrete ripassare la grammatica avanzata e dedicarvi alla narrativa. Dario Penzo, Veneziano, riprenderà la serie di Corso + Viaggio con Discover Veneto. Cooking Classes riprenderanno con Viviana Di Sciullo e Amelia Gotti, a Chevy Chase, a Potomak, o a casa vostra!

Avremo vari livelli di corso di Latino (in inglese). Siete tutti in tempo per risolvere le vostre conoscenze scolastiche, o intraprendere questa avventura alla scoperta delle nostre origini linguistiche per la prima volta! Offriamo anche un corso di latino per ragazzi italiani delle medie e del liceo.

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 su aspetti storico-culturali, appropriati all’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. A Fairfax, 3 corsi per adulti (incluso un Beginners 1) e due corsi per bambini vi attendono nella bella sede di The New School of Northern Virginia.

Visitate il nostro sito con il programma, 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
On a beautiful Sunday afternoon, October 16, 2009, with about 160 guests present, the Italian Cultural Society was honored to host a marvelous multimedia presentation by astrophysicist Riccardo Giacconi, winner of the Nobel Prize in physics in 2002. Taking us on a sweeping tour of the universe as it was known at that time, Professor Giacconi, who had recently published a book “Secrets of the Hoary Deep: A Personal History of Modern Astronomy” showed us the spectacle in considerable detail, beginning with the circular orbits of Copernicus, on to a video recording of the pulsating Crab Nebula, and ending with evidence of the universe rushing away ever faster under the influence of dark energy. Indeed, at the beginning of the 20th century our concept of the universe barely extended beyond our own Milky Way, but through ever-more-powerful telescopes expanding over an ever-widening band of the electromagnetic spectrum, we have come to know the size and age of our world. Giacconi’s noted contribution to this grand project was in his inventions and in shepherding the development of orbiting instruments in the X-ray portion of that spectrum which went on to reveal the presence of stellar and galactic sources hitherto unknown.

More than that, as director of the Space Telescope Science Institute, he defined how the astronomical community would be served by the space observatory through planning, hardware and software development, scheduling and especially in archiving of observations. The marvelous images we have all come to enjoy over decades coming from the Hubble Space Telescope are due in large part to Giacconi’s insistence that the data coming from that instrument be reduced and archived so that astronomers all over the world would have access to the results...that the data really be “public”. Indeed, about 70% of the work that is done using Hubble observations comes about because those data are properly archived. He brought the same driving vision and pattern of operation to the European Space Observatory Very Large Telescope in Chile. It could well be argued that, with its army of guest researchers, today’s “Multi Messenger Astronomy”, having added a gravitational wave component to the spectrum, is the child of that vision. In addition to these major management activities, Giacconi continued to do science as a principal investigator using the Chandra X-ray Observatory.

Riccardo Giacconi passed away on Sunday, December 9, 2018 at the age of 87. Along with the Italian community, he will be missed by all those in the world who value the understanding of our universe brought to us by the vigorous expansion of astronomical studies which he did so much to engender.
Leonardo da Vinci had many great yet incomplete projects, but maybe his greatest was a colossal bronze horse more than 7 meters tall that was supposed to be part of an equestrian statue for Francesco Sforza, father of Ludovico II Moro, Duke of Milan for whom Leonardo was working. Leonardo made many sketches and studies of the horse, and he had also constructed a large clay prototype inside the courtyard of the Castello Sforzesco. Unfortunately, some French crossbowmen are said to have used the spectacular statue as a target for their arrows, destroying it. Leonardo did not attempt the project again. Legend has it that he never stopped crying for his lost horse. More than four centuries later in 1977, a former American pilot, Charles Dent, of Pennsylvania, an idealist, art lover, and admirer of the Renaissance, read a National Geographic article on Leonardo’s horse. He decided to implement the project and started fundraising to make a reconstruction. He also looked for Leonardo’s sketches of the horse in several museums and created a scientific committee of Leonardo experts to complete the missing parts. His goal was to realize the statue and the history of Milan, as a sign of gratitude for having hosted the genius of the Renaissance and his work. He also decided that the horse should be given to the Italian people as a gesture of goodwill and international peace. Unfortunately, the generous philanthropist died in December 1994 and did not have time to see the finished work. Fortunately, the project continued with the contribution of another philanthropist and owner of a large supermarket chain in Michigan, Frederik Meijer.

Leonardo da Vinci’s Taller bronze horse (in Grand Rapids, MI)

BY JEFF NICO

Leonardo da Vinci aveva tanti grandi progetti incompiuti ma forse il progetto più grande era un colossale cavallo in bronzo alto più di 7 metri che doveva essere parte di una statua equestre a Francesco Sforza, padre di Ludovico il Moro, Duca di Milano, presso cui Leonardo lavorava. Leonardo ha fatto molti schizzi e studi sul cavallo e lui aveva anche costruito un gigantesco prototipo in argilla all’interno del cortile del Castello Sforzesco. Purtroppo, si dice che alcuni balestrieri francesi abbiano utilizzato la spettacolare statua come bersaglio per le loro frecce, distruggendola. Leonardo non ha tentato di nuovo il progetto. La leggenda narra che non abbia mai smesso di piangere per il suo cavallo perduto.

Piu di quattro secoli dopo, nel 1977 un ex-pilota americano, Charles Dent, della Pennsylvania, idealista, amante dell’arte e ammiratore del Rinascimento, ha letto un articolo del National Geographic sul cavallo di Leonardo. Ha deciso di realizzare il progetto e ha cominciato una raccolta fondi per farne una ricostruzione. Inoltre ha cercato in diversi musei gli schizzi di Leonardo del cavallo e ha creato un comitato scientifico di esperti leonardeschi, per completare le parti mancanti. Il suo obiettivo era quello di realizzare la statua e la storia di Milano, come segno di gratitudine per aver ospitato e fatto lavorare il genio del Rinascimento. Ha anche deciso che il cavallo avrebbe dovuto essere dato al popolo italiano come un gesto di buona volontà e pace internazionale. Purtroppo, il generoso filantropo è morto nel dicembre del 1994 e non ha fatto in tempo a vedere l’opera compiuta.

Per fortuna il progetto è continuato con il contributo di un altro filantropo e proprietario di una grande catena di supermercati del Michigan, Frederik Meijer.
Il nuovo benefattore ha donato i fondi necessari per terminare l’opera (tutta l’operazione ha costato alla fine più di 6 milioni di dollari), e ha chiesto alla scultrice Nina Akamu, di fare la statua. Lei, di origine Giapponese, è nata nell’Oklahoma. Quando era giovane, ha abitato in tanti luoghi negli Stati Uniti e nell’Asia dell’Est perché suo padre era nell’aeronautica militare americana. Dopo la scuola superiore, ha studiato pittura e scultura, anche presso il Maryland Institute College of Art a Baltimore nel 1977. Nel 1979 si è trasferita in Italia e ha trascorso 12 anni studiando in Toscana, a Firenze e a Pietrasanta. Akamu è ritornata negli USA e nel 1999 ha finito il cavallo in bronzo nella sua dimensione piena di quasi 8 metri e la statua ha attraversato l’oceano atlantico ed è consegnata dalla “Leonardo da Vinci’s Horse Foundation” al sindaco di Milano. L’hanno collocata in un cortile dell’ippodromo di San Siro. Però il Sig. Meijer, quando ha parlato a Nina Akamu, le ha chiesto di creare due statue, una per i cittadini italiani a Milano e una per il suo parco delle sculture a Grand Rapids. Il Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park è un giardino botanico e parco contenente circa 170 sculture. Il parco è molte grande, più di 150 acres (64 ettari), e si visitano le sculture camminando nei campi e nei boschi. Due estate fa sono andato al parco a vedere per la prima volta, tra le altre sculture, il cavallo di Leonardo. Ha le stesse dimensioni di quello di Milano ed è molto impressionante. Mi piaceva la collocazione del cavallo in un campo. È bello pensare che un lavoro mai finito di Leonardo, riviva in un parco degli USA grazie all’amore per il grande artista di persone dedicate alla sua memoria.

The new benefactor donated the necessary funds to finish the work (the whole operation cost more than 6 million dollars in the end), and he asked the sculptor Nina Akamu to make the statue. She was born in Oklahoma of Japanese origin. When she was young, she lived in many places in the United States and East Asia because her father was in the US Air Force. After high school, she studied painting and sculpture in several institutions, including at the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore in 1977. In 1979 she moved to Italy and spent 12 years studying in Tuscany, Florence, and Pietrasanta. Akamu returned to the USA and in 1999 finished the bronze horse in its full size of almost 8 meters, and the statue crossed the Atlantic Ocean and was delivered by the “Leonardo da Vinci’s Horse Foundation” to the mayor of Milan. They placed it in a courtyard of the San Siro Hippodrome. However, Mr. Meijer, when he spoke to Nina Akamu, asked her to create two statues, one for Italian citizens in Milan and one for his sculpture park in Grand Rapids. Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park is a botanical garden and park containing around 170 sculptures. The park is very large, more than 150 acres, and one visits the sculptures by walking in the fields and in the woods.

Two summers ago, I went to the park to see, among other sculptures, Leonardo’s horse for the first time. It has the same dimensions as the one in Milan and is very impressive. I liked the placement of the horse in the field. It’s nice to think that a work never finished by Leonardo, now lives in a US park thanks to the love for the great artist by people dedicated to his memory.
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