ONLINE SOCIAL MEETINGS AND EVENTS OVERVIEW

SETTIMANA DELLA LINGUA ITALIANA NEL MONDO Italian Between Word and Image: Graffiti, Illustrations, Comic Books - from Monday, October 19th to Sunday, October 25th.
VIRTUAL GALA 2020 - REAWAKENING - A NIGHT TO CELEBRATE ITALIAN INNOVATION, CREATIVITY AND THE HUMAN SPIRIT - Sunday, November 1st at 4:30 PM.

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

Buongiorno cari amici,

As we continue to navigate these uncertain times together, ICS remains committed to bringing you the highest quality Italian instruction and cultural events. We couldn’t be more excited about our upcoming Gala, which will stream online on November 1st from some of Italy’s most inspiring locations, including Genoa, Camogli, Lake Orta and Palermo (info and tickets for the Gala here). Our main fundraising goal this year is to strengthen our scholarships program. Through a competitive process, ICS scholarships are awarded to young people who excel in Italian language study, music, art, science and Latin. Your generous contributions will allow ICS to increase the amounts of the scholarships’ cash awards and thereby signal your support for these young scholars as they pursue their chosen careers. We hope you will join us in this effort by attending the virtual Gala and bidding in the Gala’s Silent Auction! Auction bids will be taken online from October 23rd to November 2nd.

As in years past, ICS is proud to participate in the “Settimana della lingua italiana nel mondo” (Week of the Italian Language in the World), an initiative promoted by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to celebrate the Italian language and its heritage through hundreds of events taking place worldwide around a common theme. This year the initiative runs from October 19th to October 25th, and the theme is truly exceptional—“Italian Between Word and Image: Graffiti, Illustrations, Comic Books.” We are bringing you several events connected to the Settimana della lingua italiana. Please see our Executive Director Francesca Casazza’s message and dedicated page for more information. Thank you, Francesca, for your tireless work on these as well as our other events! E un grazie di cuore to our entire staff and teachers for their unflattering dedication to our growing community.

Ci vediamo al Gala! 

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TABLE OF CONTENTS
September Event: Italian American County .........................3
October Event: Settimana della lingua italiana ..........................4
Virtual Gala 2020 .....................................................................5
Report of the Italian Language Program ..................................6
Abbracciando i continenti .....................................................7
My Italian Last Name and Its Influence in My Life ...............8-10
SEPTEMBER ONLINE SOCIAL EVENT - ITALIAN AMERICAN COUNTRY

BY DARIO PENZO, ICS INSTRUCTOR

In this unprecedented year, The Italian Cultural Society was happy to start our social events season on Sunday, September 27th with the book and documentary presentation of “Italian American Country, Finding Italy in Small-town America” by Paolo Battaglia, author and founder of the Anniversary Books publishing house.

The documentary follows Paolo’s journey from New York to California inspired by an Italian ambassador in Washington, Baron Edmondo Mayor Des Planches, who decided to set out for a grand tour of the United States to visit the Italian communities that, for many different reasons, had been created far from the East Coast cities. He explored the South and its racial contrasts and the West that had just stopped being the «Wild West».

The book takes us all over the United States: from Ellis Island, the gateway of America for European immigrants, to San Francisco, the golden gate of California; from Barre, Vermont, where the stonemasons from Carrara brought their political ideas along with their art, to Pittsburg, California, where the Latin sails of fishermen from Isola delle Femmine colonized rivers and oceans. From Valdese, founded by Protestants from Piedmont who transferred their community from the Alps to the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina, to Tontitown, built by farmers from Veneto and Emilia led there by father Pietro Bandini from Romagna, after escaping from the Sunnyside plantation in Arkansas.

There are small towns like Paradise Valley, Nevada and big cities like Denver, Colorado. There are miners in the company towns of Monongah, West Virginia and Dawson, New Mexico. Farmers who have brought their millenary experience in agriculture to new crops such as cotton and strawberries in Bryan, Texas, Lake Village, Arkansas and Tangipahoa Parish, Louisiana.

Interviewing the descendents of these first immigrants, the recurrent elements are related to the trajectory that Italians had to accomplish in order to establish themselves in the new society. Quoting the word of the Ambassador “They arrived poor, exhausted, despised, disliked; they worked hard, they were honest, frugal, persevering. They bought mediocre lands from the state, for $3 an acre and they improved them. Someone went on to work in the railroad, or in the mines, where work is hard, but the pay is good, if no strikes interfere. Now they have plenty of friends and are considered the best people in the world by the Americans.”

The event was fully recorded, click here to watch it on YouTube.
To purchase the book and documentary, click here.
SETTIMANA DELLA LINGUA ITALIANA NEL MONDO
Italian Between Word and Image: Graffiti, Illustrations, Comic Books

OCTOBER 19TH - 25TH

Through October 25th, hundreds of events - organized by Embassies, Consulates, and Italian Cultural Institutes and associations - will take place around the world to celebrate our language and its heritage. The initiative, promoted by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation together with the Accademia della Crusca, started in 2001. Since then a specific theme is chosen as a common thread to the events of La Settimana. This year’s theme is Italian Between Word and Image: Graffiti, Illustrations, Comic Books.

In light of the Week of the Italian Language in the World, The Italian Cultural Society of Washington D.C. is happy to organize an event in collaboration with Porto Antico of Genoa, that every year hosts the Cine&Comic fest. This November will also host the important exhibit “Tex. 70 anni di un Mito”.

Among the comics published in Italy, before the 60s, Tex Willer is definitely the most sold and appreciated even now. The first issue came out on September 30, 1948, born from the imagination of its creator Giovanni Luigi Bonelli and from the pen of designer Aurelio Galleppini, better known under the pseudonym of Galep. This comic shows the passion of those years for stories from America: it tells the adventures of Tex Willer, a ranger who travels the desert of Texas to defend honest people from outlaws.

Do not miss all the events of Istituto Italiano di Cultura Washington, including:

Children activity: Telephone Tales by Gianni Rodari Available until November 29 Part of Kids Euro Festival, Telephone Tales is a series of 12 sweet, short and animated read-aloud stories for kids by beloved Italian children’s author, Gianni Rodari. Recently translated in English by Antony Shugaar and illustrated by Valerio Vidalí, Telephone Tales is a family event!

From Barcelona we recommend Laboratorio di Italiano per Bambini - La Filosofia, un viaggio nelle emozioni, an initiative for all the Italian-speaking children of the world in collaboration with Casa degli Italiani di Barcellona.
GALA VIRTUALE 2020
For more information visit: http://gala.italianculturalsociety.org

The Board of Directors of The ICS of Washington D.C. cordially invites you to:

REAWAKENING
A CELEBRATION OF ITALIAN INNOVATION,
CREATIVITY AND THE HUMAN SPIRIT

Virtual Gala 2020
Sunday, November 1st at 4:30 pm ET

Italian leaders in their fields talk about transformations in their areas of expertise:

BEPPE SEVERGNINI
Columnist and Editor at Corriere della Sera, Opinion Writer for The New York Times, Author of bestselling books

FRANCESCA LUSINI
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MARCUS BUCCI
Mayor of Genoa and Special Commissioner for the reconstruction of Genoa's Bridge

CRISTINA CASSETTI
Ph.D., Deputy Director of NIAID's Division of Microbiology and Infectious Diseases

MATTEO AMADASI, Viola, Teatro alla Scala Orchestra and MATTIA SPLUGA, Piano, performing “Cinema Paradiso”

ConTemporary Guitar Duo FELICIA TOSCANO and LUIGI PICARDI
performing “Once Upon a Time in the West”

MIMMO MICCOLIS' choreography “Timeless”
performed by The Washington School of Ballet
KYEONGMI LIM's piano performance
as winner of Luciana Montanari-Mendola award

For more information visit: https://gala.italianculturalsociety.org

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REPORT OF THE ITALIAN LANGUAGE PROGRAM
BY FRANCESCA CASAZZA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

For this Fall Term, Session 1, we opened 54 courses and 11 more courses just started for Session 2. You are still in time to join! Look at our schedule at:

http://www.italianculturalsociety.org/italian-language-program/

Twelve of those 54 are children’s courses, like last year. Thank you to all the families who believe in the importance of continuing to learn Italian, even if we still need to keep classes online for the time being. Congratulations to our talented teachers and their young students, who are able to stay focused from their home.

http://www.italianculturalsociety.org/italian-language-program/kids-and-teens-online-italian-courses/

I would like to invite you to attend our new Cooking classes, with Domenica Marchetti, a former newspaper reporter, whose recipes and articles on Italian home cooking have been widely published in national publications, including Better Homes and Gardens, Cooking Light, Elle Décor, Fine Cooking, Food and Wine, the Chicago Tribune and The Washington Post. She grew up in a family from Abruzzo, and cooking was a big part of her childhood. I hope you won’t miss the opportunity to get to know her virtually, for now (New special prices). Information and registration for her next class on October 20 is here.

Yoga in Italian and Guitar lessons in Italian are a great plus to our program, and continue virtually.

For the XX edition of the “Week of the Italian Language in the World,” this year, we will have the pleasure to introduce you to a very Italian comic protagonist, Tex Willer who, since 1948 until today has succeeded in being part of the reading of many Italians, and became an icon of morality. The character, created by Gianluigi Bonelli, and designed by Aurelio Galleppini, is one of the most beloved heroes of Italian comics in one of the most enduring comic books in the world. The Porto Antico di Genova will be hosting the exhibit: “TEX, 70 anni di un mito,” at the beginning of November, and The Italian Cultural Society will have the privilege to offer you a taste of it, virtually.

Un caro saluto,
Francesca Casazza
ABBRACCIANDO I CONTINENTI
DI ANA MARIA E GUILLERMO BALFOUR, STUDENTI ICS

Io e mio marito siamo stati bloccati in Argentina, a causa del Covid19, mentre eravamo in viaggio a Febbraio. Dopo aver visitato la zona del lago di Bariloche e Villa La Angostura per diverse settimane a casa di una delle mie sorelle, d’un tratto gli aeroporti e i confini si sono chiusi e i nostri voli sono stati cancellati.

Era estate, il viaggio era stato bellissimo; lunghe giornate di sole, campi aperti, giardini enormi, cieli con stelle e via lattea, aria pura, cibo delizioso, vicino a una spiaggia libera, enorme e selvaggia. Quando eravamo in città, il governo ha stabilito subito regole severe, nessun visitatore nella zone per prevenzione. Mia sorella ha un appartamento lì. Le regole non permettevano ai visitatori di viaggiare, ma abbiamo potuto vedere la famiglia, visitare il Rennich che apparteneva ai nostri genitori e percorre strade serrarate in auto con due o tre persone per macchina. Ci siamo davvero divertiti e abbiamo ricordato l’infanzia con i nostri nonni. Le nostre figlie negli Stati Uniti, però, erano molto preoccupate per noi e stavano pensando ad un modo per aiutarci con il nostro ritorno a casa.

L’Ambasciata Americana in Buenos Aires, dove ci eravamo registrati come cittadini all’esterno, annunciò che Eastern Airlines aveva programmati voli di soccorso.

Alla fine, erano passati ormai 3 mesi quando siamo riusciti ad otteniamo i biglietti e le cose non sono state per nulla facili. Eravamo in una zona vicino alla Patagonia, a cinquecento chilometri dell’aeroporto. Abbiamo contattato un autista e siamo partiti alle tre del matino, con cibo, acqua, mascherine e visiere, come esploratori di un mondo sconosciuto. Abbiamo trovato forti tempesta, nebbia, fulmini, pioggia come un diluvio, durante il tragitto, ma con il nostro autista e qualche angelo custode, siamo arrivati all’aeroporto deserto e privo di viaggiatori! Il nostro autista e rimasto fino a quando hanno confermato che il volo stava partendo. Siamo riusciti a viaggiare nei posti migliori grazie alle nostre figlie ma l’hostess principale era prepotente come un sergente, forse preoccupata dalla situazione. Dopo nove ore tra le nubi siamo atterrati a Miami, anche qui l’aeroporto era senza viaggiatori, deserto come Ezeiza. A Miami ci ha aspettata una carissima giovane amica, che ci ha portato a un appartamento della sua famiglia, fortunatamente vuoto, in Key Biscayne, con vista sull’oceano, un enorme terraza e un frigorifero ben fornito con Prosecco e buon vino.

Questa avventura ha toccato profondamente i nostri cuori, in un mondo tanto colpito da queta “peste” in entrambe le parti dell’emisfero. Abbiamo un pensiero che ci accompagna in questi mesi: Siamo creature simili a uccelli, prendiamo il voli con uno scopo e molta speranza. Ora dobbiamo volare liberi sulle colline aperte o restare rinchiusi nel nostro nido, con paura del contagio?
IL MIO COGNOME ITALIANO E LA SUA INFLUENZA SULLA MIA VITA
DI GRACIELA VOLterra LUNA, STUDENTESSA ICS

La mia storia inizia in Uruguay dove sono nata e cresciuta. Appartengo alla seconda generazione d’Italiani nata in Uruguay. Mio nonno, Giulio Volterra Pagliari, d’origine Italiana, è nato a Roma ed è immigrato in Uruguay nel 1907 stabilendosi a Montevideo, la capitale, dove ha conosciuto e sposato mia nonna, Maria Brera. Qui è iniziato il ramo uruguaiano della famiglia Volterra.
Il nonno ci raccontava frequentemente aneddoti della famiglia in Italia e dei nostri antenati. Io ero piccola e non capivo molto quest’influenza straniera, ma mio nonno insisteva a parlarci del nostro cognome e di un comune medievale bello e lontano della provincia di Pisa in Toscana chiamato Volterra. Celebre per l’estrazione e la lavorazione dell’alabastro, Volterra era una delle principali città-stato della Toscana antica (Etruria) e fu sede nel medioevo di un’importante signoria vescovile. Oggi conserva un notevole centro storico di origine estrusca.

Inoltre, il nonno insisteva che se io e mia sorella fossimo nate in Italia, avremmo avuto il titolo di Contessa. Io sono stata sempre interessata a trovare maggiori informazioni sui miei antenati ed a fare una ricerca approfondita, particolarmente rimanendo un po’ di tempo a Volterra.

La prima volta che ho visitato Volterra con i miei genitori in 1996 siamo rimasti in tutto quattro ore, un tempo sufficiente per capire il carattere della città e riconoscere il legame con l’origine della famiglia Volterra. Non avevamo tempo per approfondire la ricerca dei nostri antenati.

Ma, questa visita fu abbastanza importante per noi, tanto che il mio desiderio di ritornarvi divenne molto forte, e nel 2013 sono ritornata a Volterra, questa volta per restarvi tre giorni. Il proprietario delle mie albergo, il signor Ghebo Bessi, un personaggio noto di Volterra, mi ha portato a conoscere la città, così sono stata presentata al sindaco di Volterra al Palazzo dei Priori, abbiamo visitato i monumenti storici, i musei, in particolare il museo storico Etrusco (Museo Guarnacci), il Palazzo Viti, ed altri luoghi di interesse.

Durante la passeggiata con il signor Bessi, abbiamo anche parlato dell’ultima persona di cognome Volterra che ha vissuto nella città. Questa signora anziana era partita per vivere a Roma con suo figlio. Di sicuro non erano imparentati con la nostra famiglia. Ma questa passeggiata ha accesso il mio desiderio di approfondire il mio legame con la città di Volterra.

La mia preoccupazione è di non riuscire a scoprire come la mia famiglia porta il cognome Volterra e qual è veramente il rapporto con questa bellissima e silenziosa città. Il mio prossimo viaggio in Italia avra lo scopo di svelare questi enigmi.

Durante i miei anni di vita in Uruguay, l’origine del mio cognome non era parte della conversazione familiare, ma è motivo di interesse ora che purtroppo non abbiamo più i nostri nonni ne i nostri genitori per sederci e parlare con loro del percorso della famiglia. Fortunatamente, la tecnologia oggi ci offre molte opzioni per approfondire un’indagine più ampia sull’origine della famiglia. Una cugina che abita a Pisa ha alcune informazioni sulla storia familiare, ma non è completa, sono solo parti di un puzzle. Comunque, ogni informazione, per quanto piccola e valida, contribuisce alla visione più ampia dell’origine della famiglia Volterra. Io continuerò ad indagare per completare il puzzle della nostra origine.

Devo ringraziare l’Italian Language Program e a la mia professoresa per avermi aiutato a raggiungere questo livello de conoscenza della lingua Italiana che mi ha permesso di comunicare bene in Italiano, il che facilita molto la comunicazione, e sarà molto utile nella mia ricerca.

Il mio prossimo passo è iniziare la mia ricerca ora, e una volta che potrò di nuovo viaggiare in Italia, tornare alla citta di Volterra per completare l’albero genealogico della nostra famiglia. Il mio entusiasmo di iniziare la mia ricerca in questa direzione mi da la speranza di scoprire molti dettagli della vita e della storia dei miei antenati. So che non sarà facile, ma è importante provare!
MY ITALIAN LAST NAME AND ITS INFLUENCE IN MY LIFE

BY GRACIELA VOLterra LUNA, ICS STUDENT

My story starts in Uruguay where I was born and raised. I belong to a second generation of Italians born in Uruguay. My grandfather, Giulio Volterra Pagliari, Italian born in Rome, immigrated to Uruguay in 1907 establishing himself in Montevideo, Uruguay’s capital city. There he meets and marries my grandmother, Maria Brera. Here’s where the Uruguayan branch of the Volterra family begins.

My grandfather would frequently tell us anecdotes of our family in Italy and of our ancestors. I was a little girl and didn’t understand much about this foreign influence, but he would insist in telling us about our last name and of a beautiful and distant medieval commune of the province of Pisa in Tuscany called Volterra. Very famous for the extraction and the processing of alabaster, Volterra was one of the principal city-states of Tuscany, ancient Etruria, center of an important episcopal lordship. Today it conserves an important historic center of Etruscan origin.

Moreover, my grandfather insisted that if either my sister or me would had been born in Italy, we would had held the title of Countess. I have always been interested in getting more details on my ancestors and conduct an in-depth research by remaining in Volterra for some time.

The first time I visited Volterra it was with my parents in 1996. We could only stay for about four hours, that unfortunately rendered very little time to capture the city’s character and learn of the bond between the city of Volterra and the Volterra family. We didn’t have time to go in depth in a research of our ancestry.

Regardless, this visit was very important for us, and the desire to return became very strong, and in 2013 I returned to Volterra, this time to remain three days. The owner of the hotel where I was staying, Mr. Ghebo Bessi, an important figure in the city of Volterra, took me around for a tour of the city. I was introduced to the mayor of the city at the Palazzo dei Piori, we visited many historic monuments and museums. In particular the Etruscan museum (Museo Guarnacci), the Palazzo Viti, and many other points of interest.
During this visit Mr. Bessi mentioned about the last person living in the city that had held the last name Volterra. I mentioned that I was sure we were not related. This interesting and important visit triggered my desire to know more about our links to the city of Volterra.

My most concern is to find out how is it that we came to hold the name of the city of Volterra and which is the relationship with this beautiful and silent city. In my next trip to Italy I’m sure I will discover this enigma. While living in Uruguay growing up, the origin of our Italian last name was not part of the conversation around the family, but it’s now a topic of interest, particularly as we no longer have our grandparents and parents to sit down together with them and share stories about the family. Fortunately, today technology offers many options for us to go deeper in our research and to find out more information about the origins of the family. Any information we receive, even small, is valid and contributes to an overall view of the origins of the Volterra family. I will continue to investigate the origins of our family to complete the puzzle. I have a cousin that lives in Pisa and has shared some background information about the history of the Volterra family, but unfortunately, it’s not complete, only a part of a complex puzzle.

I have to thank the Italian Language Program and my own language teacher for helping me achieve this level of proficiency of the Italian language; this has offered me the capability to communicate well in Italian, it has facilitated effective communication, and will be very useful during my future research.

My next step will be to initiate a serious research and, once travel restrictions to Italy are lifted, to return to the city of Volterra to complete the family tree. My enthusiastic approach to take this path is giving me hope to discover many details of the history of my ancestors. I know it will not be easy but is critical for me to try!
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