



La Rondine

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ITALIAN CLUB OF ST. LOUIS

July 2004

Italian Buffet Dinner and Film-“Ciao Professore”

Our July Dinner Meeting will be a different format for the Italian Club. We will enjoy a buffet dinner prepared by Baldo followed by the movie “Ciao Professore”.

We thought it would be enjoyable to have more opportunity to mingle with your friends before and during dinner and then enjoy a light-hearted film this summer.

“Ciao Professore! is the story of Marco Sperelli (Paolo Villaggio), a northern Italian teacher who gets dumped in the southern Italian town of Corzano because of a bureaucratic screw-up. At the De Amicis school, he has been assigned to teach third grade, but when he arrives, he finds the place run by the janitor. Only three of his fifteen students are in class -- the rest are out working on the streets, hustling black market goods and helping their families make ends meet. So, taking matters into his own hands, Sperelli makes a trip through the village to collect his delinquent pupils personally. The story of a

teacher and students learning from one another is a popular thematic mine that directors keep exploring. Just when you think all the ore has been removed, however, someone like Lina Wertmuller comes along and strikes a new vein. ... Wertmuller, who learned some of her craft from Fellini (she was his assistant director on *8 1/2*), has primarily been known for controversial films. Those used to her normal fare (such as *Swept Away* and *Seven Beauties*) will find *Ciao Professore!* a distinct departure. Instead of focusing on issues like sexuality, revenge, and madness, this movie makes do with a simple message of hope. ...By the end, it's difficult to decide who has changed more: the professor, his pupils, or their families. *Ciao Professore!* premiered to high acclaim on the international film festival circuit (where it was called by its original title, *Me, Let's Hope I Make It*). The accolades are well-deserved. *Review from 1994 James Berardinelli.*

Next Meeting

Wednesday

July 21, 2004

Cocktails- 6:30p.m.

Dinner- 7:00p.m.

RSVP-Dan Viele

(636) 537-5960 or

ItalianClubSTL
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Italian Club Celebrates Anniversary of the Italian Republic

As guests arrived at Baldo's Restaurant on June 16, it was obvious this was not going to be a regular Italian Club meeting. Camera-men from both Channel 5 and Channel 2 were busy setting up equipment and television news reporters were on hand checking their notes. This is the normal time of the year for the special commemoration of the anniversary of the Italian Republic when Vice Consul, Joseph Colagiovanni, gives his annual report on the past year's activities in Italy. It is also the night that the organization's Italian Heritage Award is given out.

The unusual media interest centered around a member, Vincent Imperato, who was to receive the Purple Heart that evening from Colagiovanni nearly 60 years after he was wounded in action during a battle in Germany. Imperato stated that he was a typical emotional Napolitano and this was a tremendous honor that he did not treat lightly. “Look

back at what a great thing that, not I, but the boys did, especially those still there. God bless America and those that lost their lives over there,” he said.

The Italian Heritage Award was given to Monsignor Salvatore Polizzi who is arguably the most well known Italian-American in the St. Louis area. He grew up in Our Lady Help of Christians Church downtown in the heart of Little Italy. Ordained in 1956, his first assignment was at St. Ambrose where he served as Associate Pastor until 1959 when he was transferred to St. Catherine of Alexandria. After five years, he returned to St. Ambrose as Associate Pastor until 1981 when he was made Pastor at St. Roch Church. Of all his many accomplishments, he says that his greatest pride is that he is the pastor of St. Roch Parish. In 1986, the title of Monsignor was bestowed on him by Pope John Paul II.

“Fifty-eight years ago after a terrible war, Italy voted for our beloved republic. Lift your glass to the health of the Republic of Italy and to the United States of America.”

**Toast given by
Valerio Bianco**

(Continued on page 4)

L'Angolo Del Presidente *by James Tognoni*

My Fellow Members:

I hope you are enjoying your summer-time for trips, gardening, picnics and generally relaxing. The June meeting was terrific with a spectacular turnout. Congratulations again to Msgr. Polizzi who received the Italian Heritage Award and to Vince Imperato on receiving the Purple Heart. I would like to thank Joe Colagiovanni for his interesting and informative update on the Italian government.

Make sure you come to the July meeting. It will be out of the ordinary but promises to be great fun. Come for the buffet style dinner and a movie. Please don't forget to make your reservation by phone or e-mail.

In October we will have elections for all the Officers and one Director. By our August meeting, we must have a Nominating Committee in place. If you are inter-

ested in serving on this important committee or running for one of the offices, please let me know as soon as possible. This is your Club, so please get involved and share your expertise and opinions. Speaking of which, we really need at least two people that are willing to be trained to set-up and operate the sound equipment that we use each month. With all our other responsibilities it is not always practical for the officers to be counted on to do this. Please call me at 314-865-1005 to let me know if you can help. I will train you. It is really very easy.

I wish you well and look forward to seeing you at the July meeting.

Ciao, Jim
jtognoni@earthlink.net or 314-753-9618

ITALIAN CLUB OF ST. LOUIS TOUR OF HERRIN

On Sunday, May 30, the Italian Club group departed St. Louis via chartered bus for the two hour trip to Herrin, Illinois, a town important in the history of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Italian emigration from the area near Milano to the southern Illinois region and then ultimately to St. Louis. En route, the SIU documentary film, *History of Herrin*, was shown to familiarize the group with the background and history of the town.

On arrival, the group attended a festive Mass at the Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, named after the parish church of Cuggiono, the Lombard town from which many of the original immigrants came. This was followed by a lunch at the Lombard Café and formal presentations on town history and Italian immigration by teacher Michaelann Stanley and SIU Professor John Simon. The following bus tour of the town was narrated by Mrs. Sandra Columbo, herself an immigrant from Cuggiono, and SIU Historian Gordon Pruett. One of the most interesting stops on the tour was the San Carlo Cemetery, also named after the cemetery in Cuggiono, where group members had an opportunity to inspect the many tombstones with carved with familiar Italian family names and interesting Italian language inscriptions as well as to search for graves of grandparents and great-grandparents.

We then visited the Herrin Festa Italiana, the five day long festival and carnival held annually in Herrin to celebrate the Memorial Day weekend. On the return trip, another SIU documentary film was shown, *The Legend of Charlie Birger*, which described the colorful life of Birger, a notorious outlaw and gangster in Herrin during wild prohibition period of the early 1920s.

On the return trip, we were joined by Oreste Magni and Ernesto Milani of Cuggiono; who, with their wives, then spent several days here doing additional research on the history of Italian emigration to St. Louis. Oreste and Ernesto are officials of the *Ecoistituto della Valle del Ticino*, the organization which sponsored, along with the Italian Club, the International Conference on the History of Emigration which was held in Cuggiono in July 2003.

by Gene Mariani



Joe Colagiovanni pinning the Purple Heart on Vincent Imperato - 60 years after his injury



Members of the Italian Club inspecting the tombstones at the San Carlo Cemetery in Herrin, Illinois

TERZA PAGINA

I capolavori della poesia italiana

a cura di Barbara Klein

Veronica Gambara (Pratalboino, Brescia 1485 - Correggio, Reggio Emilia 1550) fu una tra le più famose poetesse del Cinquecento italiano. Di nobile famiglia, fu in contatto con Ariosto, Pietro Aretino, B. Tasso, e altri uomini di cultura contemporanei.

Occhi lucenti e belli

di Veronica Gambara

Occhi lucenti e belli,
com'esser può che in un medesimo istante
nascan da voi nove sì forme e tante?

Lieti, mesti, superbi, umili, alteri
vi mostrate in un punto, onde di speme¹
e di timor m'empiete,
e tanti effetti dolci, acerbi e fieri
nel core arso per voi² vengono insieme
ad ognor che volete³

Or, poi che voi mia vita e morte sète⁴,
occhi felici, occhi beati e cari,
siate sempre sereni, allegri e chiari.

¹ per cui di speranza

² Gilberto, signore di Correggio, suo marito

³ ogni volta che

⁴ siete

In giro per l'Italia

a cura di Barbara Klein

Valcamonica, "la storia nella roccia"

La Valcamonica, nella provincia di Brescia, conserva il Parco Archeologico Nazionale delle Incisioni Rupestri di Naquane che offre al visitatore una delle manifestazioni di Arte Rupestre preistorica più importanti del mondo. Le figure incise raccolte in quest'area non sono state completamente censite, ma il loro numero è stimato in molte decine di migliaia; la loro importanza per la conoscenza della storia più antica dell'umanità è grandissima.

Cenni storici

La zona media della Valle Camonica inizia ad essere la residenza del popolo camuno intorno al 10.000 a.C.. In quest'epoca in cui i grandi ghiacciai si erano ritirati più in alto, la flora si sviluppò in modo rigoglioso, grazie ad una temperatura più mite e gli animali iniziarono ad arrivarvi dalle pianure. Proprio per cacciare questi animali, o forse in cerca di nuove terre da occupare, un ceppo appartenente alla popolazione dei Liguri approdò qui e pian piano si stabilì in forma definitiva, facendo così nascere il popolo dei Camuni.

Il nome Camuni appare per la prima volta sul trofeo fatto innalzare da Augusto a La Turbie, in Francia, a suggello della conquista, nel tardo I sec. a.C., dei popoli alpini ed è appunto da qui che deriva anche il nome dato alla Valle Camonica.

Dopo la prima segnalazione di rocce istoriate data da Gaultiero Laeng nel 1914 sulla Guida d'Italia del Touring Club, in varie zone della valle si sono susseguite indagini e ricerche da parte di numerosi studiosi. Ma il primo tentativo di scansione tipologica e cronologica dell'arte rupestre, condotto sull'analisi e lo studio dello stile, del contenuto e delle sovrapposizioni di migliaia di incisioni, si deve ad Emmanuel Anati, fondatore nel 1964, del Centro Camuno di Studi Preistorici.

L'arte rupestre risulta così scandita dallo studioso in quattro gruppi stilistici principali corrispondenti al periodo preistorico (dall'Epipaleolitico all'età del Bronzo: stili I-III), caratterizzato da un'arte schematica con figure isolate o raggruppate in composizioni di carattere simbolico (armi e altri manufatti), e protostorico (età del Ferro: stilo IV), contraddistinto da un'arte naturalistico-narrativa con figure in movimento e descrizione di vere e proprie azioni.

Le incisioni

Fra le oltre 300.000 iscrizioni incise sulle rocce all'aperto sono:

I "cervicalcati". I cavalieri cavalcavano da seduti oppure in piedi sui cervi. Sono scene inusuali da interpretare come figurazioni mitiche o scene reali. Secondo alcuni, si tratterebbe di scene reali che testimonierebbero, nell'età di Ferro in Valcamonica, come

in altre zone, la semidomesticazione dei cervi.



La "rosa camuna", così impropriamente chiamata per la sua somiglianza ad un fiore, è tra le figurazioni simboliche presenti nelle incisioni rupestri dell'età del Ferro e sembra assumere un'importanza particolare. Una delle associazioni più frequenti della rosa è quella con guerrieri che sembrano danzarle attorno o difenderla dall'attacco di altri armati, il

che ci fa pensare ad un simbolo molto importante del mondo guerresco, non necessariamente da riconnettere all'esclusivo mondo camuno in quanto esso compare anche in incisioni rupestri di altre zone europee, in Gran Bretagna, Svezia e Portogallo. La "rosa camuna" è il simbolo ufficiale della Regione Lombardia (vedi la bandiera lombarda) e la testimonianza della cultura preistorica estremamente evoluta in questa Regione.

Nel 1958, la Soprintendenza archeologica della Lombardia ha istituito il parco; nel 1979, poi le incisioni della Valcamonica sono diventate il primo sito italiano Patrimonio dell'Umanità sotto la tutela dell'Unesco.

Per ulteriori informazioni vedi:

<http://www.archeologia.beniculturali.it/pages/atlante/S128.html>

Buon viaggio in Italia!!!



Italian Club Celebrates Anniversary of the Italian Republic, cont'd

(Continued from page 1)

His many honors include the St. Louis University Alumni Award, awards from UNICO, CIAO and the Italian Open. The Republic of Italy honored him by naming him a Cavaliere of the Italian Republic. In 1980, President Jimmy Carter invited him to a dinner at the White House honoring President Cossiga of Italy. Both Jack Danforth and President Clinton asked for his help in Washington and he refused both prestigious offers by saying, "I just want to be a parish priest."

In his acceptance speech of the Heritage Award he referred to the Hill as perhaps the best community in the United States. He said, "Thanks for the wonderful award and thanks to Father Vince Bommarito for making and keeping this neighborhood what it is."

In giving his traditional champagne toast, Val Bianco said, "Fifty-eight years ago after a terrible war, Italy voted for our beloved republic. Lift your glass to the health of the Republic of Italy and to the United States of America."



Joe Colagiovanni reading commendation to Vincent Imperato



Fr. Bommarito giving the Benediction

Joe Colagiovanni gave his report stating that the new Consul General Eugenio Sgro was a trained economist and was

very interested in St. Louis. The focus in Italy has been on the War in Iraq and Berlusconi is a strong supporter of the United States. The Italian government is committed to staying in Iraq. Another highlight of his speech was the 2006 Winter Olympics in Italy and the opportunities it will offer. Anheuser-Busch will be the largest advertiser of the event.

Italian companies are lead suppliers of parts and components for Boeing military aircraft. Boeing has moved its corporate office to Chicago from Seattle, which is good because there is a full Italian consulate office there and a large Italian community.

The evening concluded with a final blessing given by Rev. Vince Bommarito, Pastor of St. Ambrose Parish.

by Marianne Peri Sack

Monsignor Salvatore Polizzi Receives the Italian Heritage Award

Jim Tognoni, President, presented the Italian Heritage Award to Rev. Msgr. Salvatore Polizzi at the Italian Club's June meeting. Tognoni acknowledged Polizzi's contributions to the Italian community, the metropolitan St. Louis area and to the country.

Msgr. Polizzi, the tenth of eleven children, began his education at Our Lady Help of Christians. He was ordained in 1956 and was then assigned to St. Ambrose Parish. During his 48 years in the priesthood, he has spent 21 years at St. Ambrose and 23 years as Pastor of St. Roch Parish.

Monsignor Polizzi founded Hill 2000 and created the Hill Days. He has served the St. Louis community as a member of the Human Rights Commission, the Danforth Leadership Program, the Magdala Foundation, Coro Foundation and Community Development Foundation. For 17 years he chaired the Land Reutilization Authority of the City and was a member of the Executive Committee of Regional Hospital. He was one of the original members of Operation Food Search, a member of the Housing Commission of Catholic charities and Director of the Archdiocesan Office of Urban and Community Affairs.

The Republic of Italy honored him by naming him a "Cavaliere" and in 1986, the title of Monsignor was bestowed on him.

Through the years, Msgr. Polizzi has refused opportunities to work in Washington, DC and has chosen to stay in St. Louis because "he wanted to be a parish priest". We have all benefited from his decision and we thank him!

by Marie Cuccia-Brand



President Jim Tognoni congratulating Msgr. Salvatore Polizzi on receiving the Italian Heritage Award

ITALIAN CLUB SEMINAR ON NEO-REALISMO IN ITALIAN CINEMA - SPRING 2004

Each year the Italian Club of St. Louis presents a multi-session seminar on a classical Italian topic. Past seminars have generally dealt with literature, however this time we selected the field of cinema.

This year's seminar consisted of four discussion sessions dedicated to the topic of "neo-realism" as expressed in key works of the major Italian directors who essentially created the genre and thereby influenced the future of cinema world wide. In the four sessions, brief clips of some forty major Italian films were shown, ranging from Blasetti's historical 1934 film *1860* through Fellini's 1963 autobiographical film *8-1/2*.



Participants of the Italian Club Film Seminar thanking Carla Bossola at the final session of the series

Handouts, prepared by Barbara Klein, giving brief summaries of all of the forty films presented were given to seminar participants for future reference. The directors discussed in the seminar included Alessandro Blasetti, Vittorio DeSica, Roberto Rossellini, Luchino Visconti, Michelangelo Antonioni, and Federico Fellini.

The seminar was conducted at the Southwest Bank with a total of 25 participants. Seminar leader was Italian Club member Dott.ssa Carla Bossola. The 2004 film seminar was Carla's last professional presentation to the St. Louis Italian Club as she is leaving Washington University and returning to live in Italy on June 23.

Her six years here were one of the finest cultural gifts our community has ever received. She will be greatly missed.

by Gene Mariani

**THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
ITALIAN CLUB OF ST. LOUIS
LA RONDINE**

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80 years of
Italian Culture
and Heritage***

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Prossime Manifestazioni

FUTURE ITALIAN CLUB MEETINGS & EVENTS

July 21-

Italian Buffet Dinner &
Film: *"Ciao Professore"*

August 18-

Matera e Alberobello
by Pete Puleo

September 15-

The Enemy Among Us
by David Fiedler

*The Italian Club meets the third
Wednesday of each month for
dinner at da Baldo's Restaurant*

Cocktails—6:30p.m.
Dinner- 7:00p.m.

MEDICI EXHIBIT IN MEMPHIS

On Friday, April 23, 2004, an exhibit of artifacts from the Medici's opened in Memphis. The Medici's were the primary family in Florence for over 400 years. Under their tutelage the Renaissance began and developed. This exhibit includes many artifacts owned or are associated with the Medici. The Medici were responsible for sponsoring the major artists of Florence by providing them with commissions for their work. Some of the artists that received commissions from the Medici were Michaelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Giotto, Sandro Botticelli, Donatello, Fra Angelico, and Filippo Brunellschi. Works by all these artists are included in the exhibit.

Some of the other objects include the Papal Ring of Pope Leo X, a fork that Caterina de' Medici introduced to the French court when she became Queen of France, a copy of Galileo's telescope, and a pair of Michaelangelo's slippers. The exhibit will be at the Pyramid in Memphis through October 3, 2004. For additional information call 1-800-2MEMPHIS or online to www.wonders.org.

SOUTHWEST SOCIAL CLUB MEMPHIS TOUR – SEPT 7—9

You are invited to join the Club on their tour to the Medici Exhibit, Graceland, Alfred's on Beale Street, Peabody Place Museum, Memphis City Tour, Peabody Duck March, Dixon Gallery and Gardens, Rock and Soul Museum and Gibson Guitar Factory. Leave Tuesday, September 7 and return Thursday, September 9. \$299/person; \$50 deposit. Contact Marie Luhn– (314) 432-2078 or LuhnMarie@aol.com

UNION AVENUE OPERA THEATRE

Puccini's -- "Turandot" -- August 20, 22, 26, 28 All performances are at 8 PM-
733 North Union Blvd., St. Louis, MO, 63108

SKETCHES FROM ITALY: BILL KOHN

The new show "Sketches from Italy: Bill Kohn", will run from May 25 through August 2, at the Saint Louis University Museum of Art, located in O'Donnell Hall at 3663 Lindell Boulevard. The show consists of selections from the artist's sketchbooks that he drew during several trips to Italy.