



LA RONDINE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ITALIAN CLUB OF ST. LOUIS

Next Meeting

**Wednesday,
March 19,**
Cocktails- 6:30p.m.
Dinner- 7:00p.m.
\$22 per person
RSVP
Dan & Jan Vile
(636) 537-5960 or
ItalianClubSTL@aol.com
by noon on
Tues. March 18th

"Emilia-Romagna: Saints, Sinners, and Savants"

by Anna Di Palma Amelung, Ph.D.
to be presented at our March 19th meeting

All regions and cities of Italy conjure up familiar images. For example we all associate Pisa with its famous leaning tower, Naples with Vesuvius, Venice with gondolas, Milan with fashion and industrial development, Tuscany with Renaissance and extraordinary literary and artistic achievements. But say "Bologna", and immediately visions of tortellini, tagliatelle, mortadella, and other local delicacies will dance before your eyes. Hearty, home-made, simple and honest food represent the very soul of Emilia-Romagna perhaps more than any other region of Italy. And if the Emiliani, and especially the Romagnoli, are famous for their quick temper, pride in their traditions, and stubbornness, they are also known, among all Italians, for their hospitality and joviality. Often people wonder where Romagna ends and Emilia begins. The Romagnoli know it very well. If a traveler stops to ask for a drink and is served water, he is in Emilia, no doubt; but if he is offered a glass of wine, well... he can be sure to be in Romagna!!

This region's historical roots are deep and still present in the local life and language. Inhabited first by Umbrian tribes, then by Villanovans, Etruscans, and Celts, it was after the Roman colonization of the area that the name "Aemilia" appeared, to designate the fertile plain crossed by the Via Aemilia which joined the upper Po Valley to the Adriatic sea and the city of "Ariminum", modern Rimini. With the fall of the western Roman empire "Romania" (modern "Romagna") grew as an area dominated by the Byzantines—and thus still under the influence of the ancient Roman culture—as opposed to the rest of Italy which was being taken over by the "barbarians", especially the Longobards.

Anna Di Palma Amelung, Romagnola by birth and Emiliana by upbringing, will introduce her "double region" and some of its colorful children, at least those she considers most representatives of her region, from Saint Catherine of Bologna (still sitting on a chair after over 500 years!!), to another Catherine (not so saint after all...) who became the mother of a famous "condottiere" and ended up marrying a Medici. We will learn about the famous Passatore (our own version of Robin Hood), Leonarda Cienciulli (the "soap maker" of Modena), the rice workers in the paddies of Modena and Ferrara (did not look at all like Silvana Mangano in the movie *Bitter rice*!), Giovanni Pascoli (our great poet from Romagna), and many others. At the end of the evening there will be a short quiz—yes, Anna is a teacher after all—and prizes for the winning table. So, whether you are a saint, a sinner, a savant, or anything in between, do not miss this instructive and fun evening!!

**Plan to Join
Us on
Wednesday,
April 16th**

**Lucia Mauro
speaks on**

**"My Journey
from America
to Italy to
Anita
Garibaldi"**

Mauro is a
Chicago born
speaker, arts
writer, dance
critic and
photographer.

"Napoleon Bonaparte Was Italian- Closet Italians and Other Facts"

presented at our February 20th meeting by Jim Tognoni

Webster's Dictionary defines closet as something which is secret or undisclosed. At our February presentation we looked at individuals whose name disguises the fact that they are, in fact, of Italian lineage. The presentation brought forth the question of what determines a person's nationality. In some cases the person discussed in the presentation had a grandparent that had originally been from Italy but had spent many of their formative years in another country. Subsequently their offspring were born in that country and knew it as their place of birth and growth. You have to ask at what point do you really say you are of a certain ethnicity?

Jim gave insight into some of these fascinating individuals. Most of the information is taken from the book "Closet Italians" by Nick Miletta.

A small sample of some of the people whose name hides the fact that they are of Italian heritage are: Vince Edwards – Vincent Edward Zoino; Pat Cooper – Pasquale Caputo; Jerry Vale – Genaro Louis Vitalino; Anne Bancroft – Anna Maria Italiano; Carol Lawrence – Carolina Maria Laraia; David Chase – David De Cesare; Susan Sarandon – mother was Leonora Criscione.

Our speaker was Jim Tognoni, Immediate Past-President of the Italian Club and the Area Coordinator of the National Italian American Foundation.

L'angolo del Presidente *by Marie Cuccia-Brand*

My Fellow Members:

Each month I marvel at the opportunities that we have to learn more about Italy and our heritage. As I look at the upcoming events, the challenge is "how can I go to everything?" Our March 19th speaker, Anna Amelung, always entertains us while we learn— a true teacher who loves her subject matter! In April, we will have a guest speaker from Chicago. Lucia Mauro is a renowned writer, photographer and dance critic. She will share her story with us. Please plan to join us on April 16th.

Film and opera lovers also have many opportunities during the next few months. Please check the list of upcoming Italian films offered through the Italian Film Festival and operas that will be shown at local Wehrenberg theatres.

March is also a month of celebrations- March 8th is La Festa della Donna, March 19th is Festa del Papà (the Feast of St. Joseph) and March 23 is Easter. Enjoy!

Buona Pasqua! Marie 314-680-6871

Member, Joann Gambaro Arpiani, *presented by our Memories Project Committee at our January 16th meeting*

The January meeting of the Italian Club was a step in a new direction for the Club. Joann Gambaro Arpiani was interviewed live, in front of the members by Roger Gennari. The Memories Project Committee- Roger Gennari and Debbie Monolo, had intended to show video clips of a digitally filmed interview of Joann Arpiani but the technology failed to work as planned. This may have been a blessing in disguise since it allowed for the live interview of Signora Arpiani. She had brought family members who were willing and able to add color and facts to the great stories of her life. She elaborated on her story of Frank Sinatra coming to Missouri Baking Company. He had been in town as a very young man and was performing at the old Forest Park Highlands Ballroom and some local Italians suggested to him that he come down to the Hill and the bakery. Joann's description of him was priceless: a skinny, young punk. There were other stories that brightened up the evening and brought smiles to the faces of those there. So it was not easy to bring the evening to an end. Joann Arpiani, true to form, was a distinguished, graceful lady, richly steeped in her Italian heritage, and willingly brought forth her history and story. We all are richer for this and the Memories Project will continue to interview and present our members at our meetings.

ITALIAN OPERAS AT WEHRENBURG THEATRES

Here are the local participating theatres,
and the schedule:

- The first series is from San Francisco Opera, and the titles are:

La Rondine - One show daily from Sat., March 8

- Tue., March 11

Samson and Delilah - One show daily

from Sat., March 29 - Tue., April 1

(This opera is actually performed in French.)

Don Giovanni - One show daily from Sat., April 12

- Tue., April 15

Madama Butterfly - One show daily from Sat., April 19

- Tue., April 22

Saturday and Sunday shows are 2 PM while Monday and Tuesday performances will be at 7 PM. This will be consistent which all four titles.

- The second series is from La Scala.

Those titles and dates are:

La Traviata - Wed., March 26

Maria Stuarda - Wed., April 30

Il Trittico - Thu., May 15

ITALIAN FILM FESTIVAL OF ST. LOUIS

The fourth annual Italian Film Festival of St. Louis, sponsored by the Istituto Italiano di Cultura di Chicago, Washington University's Program in Film and Media Studies, the Regional Arts Commission of St. Louis, and the National Italian American Foundation will feature the St. Louis premier of six recent Italian films. The festival is scheduled for April 4, 5, 11, 12, 18 and 19, 2008. All films will be shown in 35mm in Italian with English subtitles in the 346 seat theatre in Brown Hall 100 on the campus of Washington University in St. Louis at 8 p.m. Admission is FREE and open to the general public. For further information, please visit the festival's website www.italianfilmfestivalstlouis.com or call 314-422-3102.

The publicly and critically acclaimed film *Mio fratello è figlio unico* (*My Brother Is An Only Child*), by director Daniele Luchetti, will have its St. Louis premiere at this year's festival. Nominated for 8 David di Donatello awards, the film won four, including best actor, best supporting actress, and best screenplay. Set in a small village near Naples during the turbulent 1960s and 1970s, the story focuses on two brothers, Accio (Elio Germano) and Manrico (Riccardo Scamarcio), who have opposite political beliefs and are in love with the same woman. The film debuted in Italy in 2007 and since then has been very successful at numerous international film festivals, including the 2008 Palm Springs International Film Festival.

The Italian Club is a sponsor of the Italian Film Festival.