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OUR GUEST SPEAKER ON OCT. 18 MIXES ITALIAN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

On Oct. 18 Portland State Prof. Silvia Boero will speak to the Tuscan Association about Italy's turbulent 1970s. Prof. Boero has taught at PSU since 2007. Her specialty is Italian language and culture which, as you'll see, covers a wide range of material.

La Lettera Toscana caught up with Prof. Boero recently to learn more about her and her presentation...



SILVIA
BOERO

LLT: The classes you teach at PSU begin with the Italian language, but they delve into Italian art, literature and film. Is there a particular discipline among these that most appeals to you?

Prof. Boero: My main area of research is Women Studies in the context of European History. Lately, though, I have dedicated quite a bit of my time to film studies, with specific attention to documentaries. In my dreams, though, I would love to become an expert in Medieval Art History.

LLT: You've taught college classes in Italy as well as in the American South, Midwest and Northwest. Do the students vary greatly from region to region, or from Italy to the U.S. ... or are they attracted to the study of Italian language and culture for generally the same reasons regardless of where they are from?

Prof. Boero: The majority of students are attracted to the study of the Italian Language and Culture – unfortunately, I have to say – because of the still-existing stereotype of an Italy “made” of spaghetti, mandolino, Sophia Loren, fashion, wine, and, sometimes, Pavarotti.

(see **TEACHING**, page 6)

NEXT MTG:
SUN., OCT. 18, 3:30PM
CARVLIN HALL
UPCOMING MEETINGS:
NOV. 15, DEC. 20

DAL PRESIDENTE

ITALY IN THE 1970'S

BY JIMMIE MOGLIA
PRESIDENT



Welcome Members, Prospective Members and Friends of the Tuscan Association of Oregon. This year 2015-2016 is the 20th (!) anniversary of the founding of the Association, by Carlo Mannocci, who follows the events and advises on the activities of the Association from his residence in Salem. Yes, the “inaudible and noiseless foot of time” never allows itself some rest. Some time in 2016 we are planning a meeting and festivities dedicated to the celebration of our 20th Anniversary.

For the first meeting of the 2015-2016 season we are honored to have as a guest speaker Prof. Silvia Boero. Silvia is Associate Professor of the Italian Department of World

(see **OCTOBER**, page 2)

L'ANGOLO ITALIANO	2
THAT'S OUR JIMMIE!	3
REMEMBERING EVERETTE.....	4
OF FOUNTAINS AND CIGARETTES	5

AMORE ITALIANO

The Oregon Ballet Theater has an innovative program coming up this weekend with an Italian flair. *Amore Italiano* is a double-bill. The first work evokes Naples with tarantellas and flashy footwork ... then the troupe premieres a new ballet based on the music of Renaissance composer and murderer Carlo Gesualdo. *The Huffington Post* glowingly previewed the performance last week.

[Tickets](#) are available, starting at \$29, for the performances Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights at Keller Auditorium downtown.



OCTOBER MEETING FOCUSES ON ITALY IN CRISIS

(continued from page 1)

Languages and Literature at Portland State University. She is Italian with a triangle of geographical roots: Genova, Modena and Tuscany.

Her experience and career is distinguished, extensive and, may I say, impressive – starting as a Teacher of the Italian Language and Coordinator of the Foreign Language Program, care of the Ministry of Public Education in Italy. This was followed by varied teaching positions at higher learning institutions such as Purdue University, Duke University, and then Portland, with assignments at the University of Georgia and the University of Macerata (Italy).

Besides the Italian Language, her courses include Italian Literature and Art, “Italian through Cinema” and History of the Italian language – which could be classed, together, under the heading of “socio-linguistics.”

Her talk will focus on a relatively recent decade in the history of Italy, the '70s, a convulsive time when the country was rent by violent terrorist acts carried out by the right and the left, the most notorious of which was the 1978 assassination of Aldo Moro, at the time secretary of the Christian Democratic Party.

Silvia will use as a “platform,” scenes from a movie by Italian Director Pupi Avati, who first gained prominence with the movie, “The House of the Laughing Windows,” the history of a painter who must restore a fresco in a house inhabited by ghosts.

We look forward to welcoming Silvia to the Tuscan Association of Oregon. *(For more on Prof. Boero, please see page 1.)*

L'ANGOLO ITALIANO

DI CARLO ILIO MANNOCCI

Bentornati soci dalla pausa estiva... Le cose in Italia continuano con alti e bassi, la solita routine politica, al momento le dimissioni del Sindaco di Roma Ignazio Marino sono all'ordine del giorno creando movimenti, illazioni e... scommesse su chi sarà il futuro primo cittadino della capitale. Il tentativo da parte della deputata eletta nell'America del Nord Onorevole Fuchsia Fitzgerald Nissoli per la nuova legge sulla cittadinanza non è andato in porto, perciò speriamo solo nel futuro, come per tanti altri provvedimenti che però non vedono mai... la luce!!!!

Gli italiani all'estero hanno rinnovato il C.G.I.E. (Consiglio Generale degli Italiani all'Estero) in formato ridotto in confronto al precedente... Al solito le elezioni sono state governate dai partiti, alla faccia degli interessi di coloro che vivono fuori dall'Italia.

Ci avviciniamo al nuovo anno, nel 2016 celebreremo il 20mo anniversario di fondazione dell'Associazione Toscana dell'Oregon, nel 1996 non avrei mai creduto di arrivare fino a questo traguardo. Prepariamoci a festeggiare e godiamoci l'evento, fa parte della nostra cultura!!

SO, HOW MUCH DO *YOU* KNOW ABOUT OUR CLUB PRESIDENT, JIMMIE?

BY KEN KANE

(Author's note: Over the summer, I had the pleasure of writing an article about Jimmie Moglia for [L'Italo-Americano](#), the newspaper and Website which serves the West Coast Italian community. I – really, we since there were six of us in the room – interviewed Jimmie for the story at the end of the Tuscan Association picnic on June 27, which is summarized on page 6. I wrote two versions of that story. The shorter version ran in L'Italo here is part one of the longer version.)

On a summer evening, six Italian-Americans sit around the table, a barbecue just completed. Now it's time to chat and drink a little. Seated are an engineer, a Shakespearean scholar, an inventor, an online historian, an expert on reading and memory, and a cruise ship crooner.

And his five friends.

Jimmie Moglia talks, in his usual lilted, self-deprecating way. The others ask him questions, listen, and laugh. Jimmie may not be “the most interesting man in the world” ... but he made the finals. (He probably lost because he prefers a big Tuscan red to Dos Equis.)

To call him a Renaissance Man sells him short. Or maybe it's a compliment to the Renaissance. Jimmie's eclectic interests and skills have taken him from Turino as a child, to Genoa as a student, to Odessa as an Italian cruise ship Country & Western singer, and finally (for most of the past 40 years) to Portland where he has had multiple careers as an engineer, a years-ahead-of-his-time inventor, an author and a lecturer. As we all know, he's also the president of the Tuscan Association of Oregon ([OregonTuscans.com](#)).

Though it seems hard to fathom, Jimmie claims to have been a poor high school student. “I learned very little. The subjects I studied were dramatically useless. Among them were five years of Greek and eight years of Latin,” he said. “That is where I got my inclination and my certain flair for what is utterly, totally and incontrovertibly useless.”

Even so, he came out of the experience fundamentally changed by a philosophy professor who taught at the school, though Jimmie never actually had him in class. He “invented a method called ‘philosophic painting,’ which intrigued me because he taught that even the most abstract of concepts that we think of are actually graphics. We don't [consciously] think about it because we are used to doing it, but that *is* the case,”

said Jimmie. “Years later, when that same thought occurred to me, I sought out the original professor who was, unfortunately, no longer alive. But I found some of his pupils, and so I was able to find some of his work.”

Philosophic painting imbued much of Jimmie's future work and pursuits, much of which occurred after his emigration to the United States in the 1970s. But not everything. Though he says with a chuckle that “The work I did in Italy I did not put on my resume!” he did spend a memorable period following high school as an entertainer on a Mediterranean cruise ship.



At the time, (the 1950s), he was fascinated by The Everly Brothers, Elvis Presley and Country & Western music. “But my accent wasn't exactly a Tennessee accent! There is an element of madness in this – I spent one entire summer studying the means and the sounds of Country music,” he said. Though he never could shake his Italian accent when he sung Country, he won a Ligurian talent competition and landed a job as a cruise ship singer.

His favorite port of call was Odessa in the Ukraine, where he performed in port, not just on the ship. Years later, his time in Odessa inspired a scholarly pursuit ... but we're getting ahead of the story.

Eventually, he earned a degree in electrical engineering from the University of Genoa. His career brought him to Portland more than 40 years ago to work for a large American electronics manufacturer. Ironically, his territory was Europe, so he moved back to the continent.

*(see **BORING**, page 4)*

REMEMBERING EVERETTE HOLT WILLIAMS III, 1941 – 2015

BY ROSALIE SCHMITZ

(Editor's note: It's with sadness that we report the passing of Tuscan Association member Everett Williams on Sep. 1. Everett, who also was known to some as Holt, was distinctive for his snappy attire at our meetings and even at our picnics, and for that braided ponytail of his.)

Everette moved with his parents to the Portland area in 1945. He attended Lake Oswego public schools, graduating from high school in 1959. In the summers, he enjoyed golf, swimming and water skiing.

He graduated from Willamette University in Salem with a B.A. in Political Science and he was a member of Sigma Chi fraternity. Over the years, he studied at UCLA and the University of Oregon. He earned a masters degree in teaching at Portland State University and, from the the University of Wyoming in Laramie, a degree in international studies, specializing in Latin America.

A long career of teaching English as a second language and many travel adventures began with his service in the Peace Corps, from 1965-68, in Concepcion, Chile where he became fluent in Spanish. He went on to teach English in different



countries such as Iran, Kuwait, Hungary, South Korea, China, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Japan, where he learned spoken Japanese.

He wrote two unpublished memoirs detailing this adventurous life of visiting over 108 countries.

Since retiring from teaching overseas and in Portland, he was active at the Lake Oswego Adult Community Center, painting pictures, playing Scrabble and giving occasional presentations. *(Don't we wish we'd been lucky enough to have seen one at Carvlin Hall?!)*

Aside from the Tuscan Association, Everette was active in the Lake Oswego United Methodist Church and the local Returned Peace Corps Volunteers group.

He enjoyed taking walks and hikes. He was an outstanding photographer and took great pleasure in showing photo albums of his travels to his many friends.

He is survived by his brother, sister-in-law and nephew, Van, Lala and Nick Williams; two cousins in the state of Wyoming; two cousins in the state of Washington; and also by his long time housemate, best friend and Tuscan Association member Rosalie Schmitz of Portland.

BORING MEETINGS SPAWNED NEW CAREER PATH, YOUR DAILY SHAKESPEARE

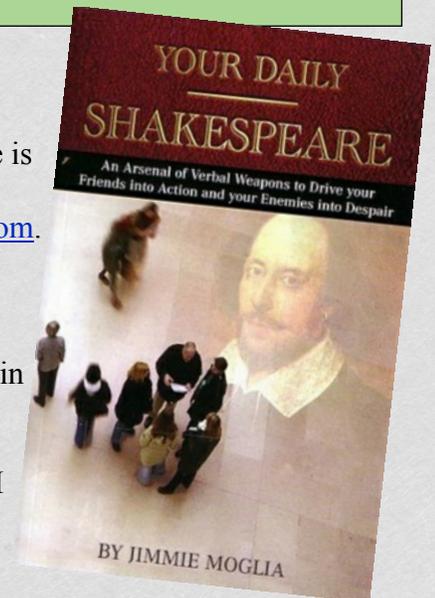
(continued from page 3)

"I had to fly back to the U.S. fairly often for debriefings and meetings – boring meetings," he explained. To pass time on a flight, he picked up a copy of *Richard III*. "There was a beautiful line about a boring speaker: ***What need'st though run so many miles about, when one mayst tell thy tale the nearest way?*** That was fantastic!

"At that point I said, 'There must be a book that exactly connects the situation that one may find himself in to a Shakespearean line.'" But there wasn't, except for an inadequate, unindexed booklet written in 1832. So, Jimmie decided to create one. The book, *Your Daily Shakespeare*, turned out to be a 15-year project. He describes the book as an "*I Ching* of Shakespeare." In it, "you can find what you are looking for – religion, life, death, sex – you can find

anything you like." There is a companion Website, YourDailyShakespeare.com.

The core impetus for the book, he explained, "was extreme boredom, a certain penchant for elegance of expression, and the fact that I couldn't find what I was looking for." Such pragmatism has often repeated itself in the intervening decades of his life. And the Shakespeare book touched off new careers and worlds of exploration in the evolution of Jimmie Moglia, Rhinestone Renaissance Boy ... as we'll see next month.



A FAMOUS FOUNTAIN... AND A CIGARETTE

BY JIMMIE MOGLIA

Rome's *Piazza Navona* is a celebrated touring target, made famous by movies, stories, anecdotes and, of course, by its sculptures, fountain and architecture.

There is a history in all men's lives, as well as in works of art. In this instance, the most well known feature of the *Piazza*, is the Fountain of the Four Rivers, designed by Baroque architect Gian Lorenzo Bernini, the same who created the Colonnade in St. Peter Square. The Fountain of the Four Rivers was assembled between 1648 and 1651.

The four statues (each the product of a different sculptor), are allegories of the four great rivers of the earth, the Nile, the Ganges, the Danube and the Rio de la Plata – symbolizing the divine grace spreading across four continents, thanks, of course, to the Church.

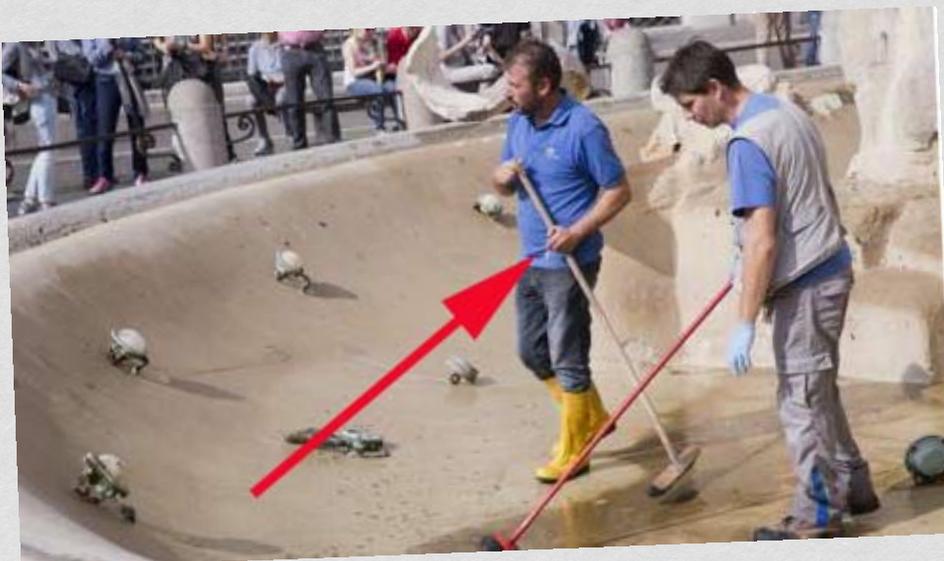
The rivers are represented by four nude giants, leaning against the central rock, which supports the Obelisk of Roman Emperor Domitian.

Renaissance, and later Baroque art, was quite tolerant of nudity, and much flesh is visible in images and statues inside Roman churches. For instance, the statue of Justice at the base of the tomb of Pope Paul III Farnese (1468-1549) in St. Peter's, had, as a model, Paul's sister and most beautiful Giulia Farnese. During the peak of the Counter-Reformation, Pope Clement VIII had the statue covered by a metal tunic.



But when it became known that the metal tunic was removable, the Statue of Justice became one of the most visited attractions for pilgrims coming to St. Peter's. According to a German traveller, tourists had to pay but one *zecchino* (about one dollar) to have the tunic temporarily removed. A kind of cultural, or rather sculptural stripping.

But returning to *Piazza Navona*, "reliable sources" of the time report that Bernini's contract for the fountain was the result of intense and unbeatable lobbying. To obtain the commission for the fountain, Bernini's sister-in-law, Dame Olimpia Maidalchini, donated to Pope Innocent X, a five-foot-high model of the work, in sterling silver. Which crushed the application of Bernini's rival, Borromini (one of Borromini's most famous works is the canopy inside St. Peter's.) According to tradition, the sculpted River Rio de la Plata lifts his hand towards the facing Church of St. Agnes (designed by Borromini) in a gesture of self-defense.



Besides doing their jobs as allegorical representations, the (4) rivers help sustain the Obelisk, which was discovered only a few years earlier while excavating in the Circus of Emperor Massentius.

The costs to create the Fountain of the Four Rivers were so high that the Pope had to raise the sales tax on bread, while reducing the standard weight of the loaf. This, understandably, increased the people's hatred, both of the Pope and even more so, of the sister-in-law.

(see **STATUE**, page 7)

TEACHING ITALIAN MEANS BREAKING DOWN “OLD COUNTRY” STEREOTYPES

(continued from page 1)

When they come to Italian classes they discover that things are quite deeper than that. It is – at least in my experience – the same for most students, regardless the area they come from. However, once immersed in the culture of Italy, their point of view changes quickly and many times I have been very satisfied with the result.

LLT: A current class you are teaching at PSU is called “Italian Freaks and Punks – Italian Culture and Civilization from 1950 - 2005, Retold by Protest Songs.” A Google search shows this to be an area of particular study of yours over the years. What draws you to this subject matter?

Prof. Boero: Songs can give interesting representations of some social and political situations of a country.

Besides, songs can help in learning grammar structures that otherwise, detached from a practical context, may be difficult to grasp.

Italy has a long and interesting music tradition; popular music, like in many other countries, marked important moments of Italian history.

LLT: Can you tell us just a little about your Oct. 18 talk?

Prof. Boero: My presentation will actually focus on director Pupi Avati and his film *La Mazurka del Barone*, 1972, an allegory of Italy during the early '70s, perhaps one of the hardest times for our country after World War II. The film is hilarious and, at the same time, tragic, following in the best Italian tradition of *tragicommedia*.

JUNE 27 “PICNIC” DEMONSTRATED CLUB’S RESOURCEFULNESS



90+ temps didn't deter us from a good time – even if that meant taking the festivities indoors.



From Rosalie's classic Checker car to the tasty Rose's ice cream to the spur-of-the-moment tag team interview of Jimmie around the dining room table, everyone

enjoyed themselves. That interview spawned a profile of Jimmie in the Sep. 3 issue of *L'Italo-Americano* and an extended version of that article which appears here on page 3.



ON THE TUSCAN HORIZON...



NOV. 15 MEETING
PROGRAM TO BE ANNOUNCED

DEC. 20 MEETING
HOLIDAY POTLUCK

JAN. 10, 2:30PM, CARVLIN HALL
FESTA DELLA BEFANA

COMING UP SOMETIME THIS SPRING...
THE CELEBRATION OF THE
20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
TUSCAN ASSOCIATION OF OREGON

WATCH *LA LETTERA TOSCANA* FOR DETAILS!

CALENDAR SALE UNDERWAY

Our friends at *Amici d'Italia* have begun their annual Italian calendar sale. The calendar features photos by Robert Kaufmann which vary from the Duomo di Milano (below) to Sicily, Cortona, Genova, Rome and beyond.

The 12" x 12" wall calendar costs \$14 and can be ordered through Kerry-Lynne Demarinis Brown, 503-287-3255 or difamigliabari@outlook.com. Order by Oct. 23 for delivery before Thanksgiving.



STATUE SYMBOLIZES ROME'S PROBLEMS, THEN AND NOW

(continued from page 5)

As for Bernini's sculpture, what triggered an interest in this most remarkable allegorical fountain, was the equally allegorical photo taken on Oct. 7 of two cleaners sweeping the basin (see page 5). One of them holds a lighted cigarette in his hand, with the ash falling into the very artwork he is assigned to clean.

Readers may have heard of the recent resignations of the Mayor of Rome, whose achievements included a string of sumptuous banquets for friends and acquaintances at Italian taxpayers' expense, and a self-invitation to follow the Pope in America (equally at taxpayers' expense).

The mayor's resignations and the cleaner's cigarette are good allegories of the current government of the Eternal City, just as Bernini's masterpiece was an allegory of the divine grace, dispensed on the world by the Church.