



LA LETTERA TOSCANA

Dicembre 2012/
Gennaio 2013



Dal Presidente

Buon Natale & Buon Anno!

by Audrey Perino
President

Recently I was reading a newsletter from another local Italian organization – our various clubs share information and try to keep each other abreast of activities. I noticed a reference to a low turnout at a meeting. This made me think how grateful I am that, in starting my term as the head of the OregonTuscans, our meetings this fall have been well-attended.

We've had 30 or more at both our October and November meetings, despite some bad weather. Pat yourselves on the back ... and keep up the good attendance!

Occasionally dates/locations for meetings will change as we move forward ... I hope our turnouts stay strong. In January, for example, our celebration of *La Befana* takes place on the FIRST Sunday in January. It is also "off-site" – at St. Michael's Church downtown. My thanks to Frank Palandrani for organizing the event and to one of those other fine clubs, Amici d'Italia, for joining us in hosting it. (see *Dal Presidente*, page 3)

What's happening...

Sunday, Dec. 16, 3:00pm at St. Philip Neri

Business: Please pay your dues. Discussion of *La Befana* and upcoming meeting plans.

Program:

Family Matters: Gino Pieretti

A little Dante ... a little Natale!

Jimmie Moglia's new book, food & wine, and Christmas caroling. **Please bring a dessert or appetizer to share, wine (if you like) and your place setting.**

Future meeting dates...

Feb. 17, Mar. 17, Apr. 21, May 19
& perhaps a June picnic

Festa della Befana

Sun., Jan. 6, 2:30pm

Our January event is geared toward youngsters. It is taking place – literally – on the 12th Day of Christmas at **St. Michael's downtown** (NOT at Carvlin Hall). Read more about it on page 2.

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by our Jimmie Moglia
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La Lettera Toscana is edited by Ken Kane. OregonTuscans.com contains an expanded newsletter. Send feedback, photos or stories to 37 SW Canby St., Portland, OR 97219, call 503-246-6462 or e-mail OregonTuscans@gmail.com.

Dec. 16: A little Dante ... and a little Natale!

Family Matters this month features Gino Pieretti, a former president of our club.

Gino will tell us about his family, his forebears and growing up in Portland during World War II.

Will you be our next Family Matters presenter? We'll ask for a volunteer for February.



Then business: Audrey will collect dues and talk about logistics and programs for our winter and spring meetings. We'll hear an update on how the preparations are going for *La Befana*. We'll also have a discussion of our second annual potluck and

silent auction to benefit the club's treasury, scheduled for March 17.

Then we'll get a detailed account of the celebration surrounding the publication of Jimmie Moglia's new book, *Our Daily Dante – 3500 ways to get away with it (with Dante)*. Both Jimmie and Carlo Mannocci made the trip to Florence last month for the release of the book, which was published by Regione Toscana. (Read more about the book on page 3.)

Next we'll break for heavy hors d'oeuvres, desserts and wine – **please bring an appetizer or dessert to share, wine (if you want) and your placesetting.** And we'll wrap up with Audrey leading us in Christmas carols from the piano. Come join us for wine, Dante and song on Dec. 16!

Jan. 6: La Befana 2013 ... *the tradition continues*

by Kerry-Lynne Dimarinis Brown, editor of the *Amici d'Italia* newsletter (where this article first appeared)

La Befana is one of Italy's oldest and most celebrated legends. Each year on January 6 the children of Italy awaken in hopes that *La Befana* has made a visit to their house. This is a significant day to Italians because it marks the end of the Christmas season and the day that the Three Wise Men arrived at the manger of the Christ child. Over the years the Epiphany has been a more celebrated holiday for the children of Italy than even Christmas.

As legend has it, *La Befana* is a cranky, old woman who sweeps her home and walkway all day. She is not welcoming to guests, and children do not like her. One night as *La Befana* tries to sleep, a bright light floods into her bedroom. The light is a bright star that has suddenly appeared in the night sky.

The next morning, a glorious procession of camels, horses, elephants, and three kings stop at her door to inquire if she knows the way to Bethlehem. The

three kings are guided by the bright star as they search for a Baby King. Cranky *Befana* is too busy sweeping and is of no help to the kings, so they travel on their way. A little boy encourages the old woman to come with the procession in search of the Baby King who has come to change the world.

La Befana decides to follow but first bakes cookies, cakes, and candies to bring as her gift to the Baby. Upon leaving, she decides to first sweep her house clean. *La Befana*



has to run to try to catch up to the procession and soon tires out. The night sky is suddenly filled with angels singing about a night of miracles.

La Befana rises to her feet and begins to run, crying out to the angels to help her find her way to Bethlehem. Suddenly, *La Befana* begins to feel lighter as she rises up and miraculously begins running through the night sky.

(see *La Befana*, page 4)



Jimmie Moglia autographs for Florentine readers last month

Jimmie's a Tuscan best seller *Here's a sample of what he'll tell us Dec. 16*

On Nov 16, in the "Casa Dantesca" in Florence, there was held the presentation of Jimmie Moglia's book *Il Nostro Dante Quotidiano – 3500 Modi di Cavarsela con Dante*. Converted into English the title goes as follows, *Our Daily Dante – 3500 ways to get away with it (with Dante)*.

The presentation was held in concomitance with the Assembly of the World Tuscans. Introducing the speaker were Nicola Cecchi, Vice President of the Organization for the World Tuscans and Professor Anna Benvenuti, who teaches Medieval Studies at the University of Florence.

The hall where the presentation was held is decorated throughout with 13th century frescoes. The building is located in *Via Calimala* and the actual name is "*Palagio dell'Arte della Lana*" or Palace of the Art of the Woolmakers. In fact, part of the frescoes show the various stages of wool making. The Palace is connected by a bridge corridor to the famous Oratory of Orsammichele, described in all languages and all books of History of Art.

Jimmie did not so much explain the book. Rather, he emphasized with examples the value and effect of a pointed, timely and appropriate quote in all communications at large. He also briefly spoke of the medical-therapeutic value of poetry. But to have its medical effect, poetry must be memorized. In this context Jimmie spoke briefly of a method he designed to memorize poetry while having good fun

Dal Presidente

(continued from page 1)

You can read about the details of *La Befana*, and how you can sign up a youngster in your life for the festivities, on page 2. You'll also find there a lovely telling of the story behind the celebration.

We anticipate that our April meeting also will occur off-site, because of a scheduling conflict at St. Philip Neri that day. We'll discuss alternatives for that event at our December meeting.

Since our January event is not a business meeting *per se*, and since it occurs so early in the month, this is our last newsletter until February. It's also our last newsletter before your dues are due in January!

Some of you have already paid these lower dues for 2013 – *grazie!* If you haven't, you can pay them at the December meeting – just hand me a check or cash. Or you can mail a check made out to "Tuscan Association of Oregon" to 37 SW Canby St., Portland, Oregon 97219. Dues are \$25 for singles and \$35 for families.

I hope to see you Dec. 16, but in case you won't make it, let me wish you and yours a joyous holiday season and a great new year.

Buon Natale!

Audrey

doing so. It will be part of the book he is working on, "The Art of Memory in the XXI Century."

The presentation was well attended and well accepted. After which, members of the Assembly of World Tuscans participated in a dinner followed by a show at the "*Teatro del Sale*." An actress produced an excellent solo describing, in a mildly satirical vein, habits and ways of life of the Florentines.

The Tuscan Association of Oregon thanks all who worked so hard to make the event possible. Jimmie will have copies of the book, which is in Italian, for purchase at our Dec, 16 meeting.

L'Angolo Italiano

di Carlo Ilio Mannocci

Il maltempo e' senza dubbio alcuno il protagonista di turno. L'Italia e' stata colpita da temporali, "bombe d'acqua" e tutto cio' che puo' causare danni ingenti all'agricoltura, alle abitazioni e le strutture. Tutto cio' si aggiunge alla situazione finanziaria ed economica del paese e tutto non lascia travedere un orizzonte limpido. Il 2013 sara' un anno di decisioni e speriamo che le elezioni previste a primavera portino stabilita' e prosperita' all'Italia.

Grande successo del nostro Jimmie Moglia a Firenze col suo libro su Dante... Un altro anno volge alla fine... la nostra associazione e' viva e vegeta e assieme continueremo a farla prosperare con gioia di tutti.

Auguri di Buone Feste a tutti!

A letter to the editor...

Dear Members of the OregonTuscans and Friends,

I take just a moment to tell you how much my sisters, Linda, Rita and Christina, and I appreciated your "Remembering Our Flora" in your recent Newsletter.

You were Mom's friends, and Mom *treasured* her friends! She looked forward to your meetings, knowing that she would enjoy every minute with all of you. Mom loved Italy and all things Italian; the history, the language, the people, music, food, the wine.....and Mom loved you!

Someone once said, "A friend is someone who reaches for your hand...but touches your heart." Mom touched the hearts of lots of people; and all of you, in turn, have done the same. Thank you for your friendship, and for the comfort you have given us.

Viva Italia!
Gratefully,
Flora's #2 daughter, Julie Rigotti Cettina

La Befana

(continued from page 2)

She never found the Baby King but every year on the Feast of the Three Kings, *La Befana* runs through the night sky. She brings gifts to children and then sweeps their rooms clean. She does this in hopes that



one of the children might be the Baby King of Bethlehem.

The annual *Festa della Befana* presented by Amici d'Italia and the Tuscan Association of Oregon is Sunday, Jan. 6, 2013. The *festa* begins at 2:30pm

and is open to children aged 3 to 10 years old. *La Befana* will arrive in Balestra Hall at St. Michael's Catholic Church, 424 SW Mill Street, in downtown Portland. *La Befana* will give out gifts to the children as she passes through on her journey to find the Christ child.

Children **MUST** be pre-registered to participate in the fun and registration is limited to 50 children. Please contact Frank Palandrani at 360-576-0453 or pf frank@msn.com to sign up a child.

Grazie Duespayers!

Thanks to those OregonTuscans who have paid their 2013 dues since our last meeting...

Wilbur & Delores Menicosy

Gino & Astrid Pieretti

Rosalie Schmitz & Everette Williams

Candis Smyk Hurlbut

Esther Tuon Riley

Maria Rose & Lowell Brekke

Bill Galbreath & Joann Cartasegna

Mario & Jo Monti

Audrey Perino & Ken Kane

Dues are \$25 for singles/\$35 for families. Please pay your dues by the end of January!

