

# IAHF NEWS



ITALIAN AMERICAN HERITAGE FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER • NOVEMBER 2010 • FOUNDED AUGUST 5, 1975 • CELEBRATING 35 YEARS

## President's Message

by Ken Borelli



## Autumn's Heritage Harvest

The autumn and winter months are upon us, and it's a timely reminder to reflect a bit about the recent activities of the Italian American Heritage Foundation. So much of our focus this year has been to promote our heritage in a number of areas, many of them new venues. These include the new home for our stellar Festa in San Jose's emerging Little Italy, regional lunches, expanded activities in the arts, recently with the Mission Chamber Orchestra and strengthened collaborations with the Western Regional Chapter of the American Italian Historical Association, Santa Clara County Master Gardeners Association, along with Bay Area ventures with The Italian American Community Service Agency, Il Museo Italo Americano, the Italian Cultural Institute and the Offices of the Consul General of Italy in San Francisco. Many of the articles in this issue of the paper represent the fruits of this collaboration.

These activities also represent an expanded dialogue within the Italian American Community about heritage, and the vitality and bounty that this sort of engagement represents. This engagement transcends the IAHF and becomes a way to reinforce the dynamics of our unique cultural focus in the South Bay and beyond. To some extent our heritage and sense of community is a fragile matter. The reality is, like most similar organizations, our events and activities must draw from the greater community. Likewise, it is also a tangible process that does need nurtur-

ing. It really is a major reason why we are committed as a Foundation to put so much time and energy into so many of these activities. I could cite many such examples, but sometimes it is the small things that become memorable. One such event was last month's regional lunch where we celebrated the Italian heritage of Switzerland and the Italian speaking Canton of "Il Ticino". It is also a long overdue recognition of the roll that our common Italian culture played in the life of this special community and the background of some of our IAHF members who trace their origins to Il Ticino. We can say the same as we begin to learn a lot more about the heritage of Italy's unique and historical Albanian Italian heritage speckled throughout primarily Southern Italy, again representing a surprisingly high portion of our IAHF membership.

This sort of programming underscores the importance of learning and nurturing who we represent as a community. It also means engaging in a dialogue with the diversity of who we are as Italian Americans in Santa Clara County. That diversity was underscored by the coming together of so many visitors to our Festa. The challenge now becomes to move beyond a visit to our emerging Little Italy, to affirm a major part of our historic roots in the valley, and perhaps even help promote a "Heritage trail" that highlights the collective achievements and real contributions of so many of our ancestors. It takes a lot of hands to help bring in this harvest!

And we are particularly welcoming of so many of the new members that have joined the organization. Their enthusiasm is especially welcomed during what I consider "this historical epoch".

Part of this "point in time" includes being engaged in the regional celebration of the 150th anniversary of the unification and founding of the modern state of Italy. Consider too, that it was a similar energy, the coming together of prominent Italian Americans in Santa Clara County 35 years ago to celebrate the bicentennial founding of our great

nation, that became the catalyst for the founding of the Italian American Heritage Foundation! (Did you know that?) As we engage in the issues and experiences of today it is important to acknowledge those not always clear causal linkages; and so it is today with our current realities. There are several initiatives that incorporate this vision. One that we need to spend some quality time in assessing now and in the new year is the relevancy of a united Italian Cultural Center, that can serve as a focal point for the valley's various Italian American organizations. How do we come together and build common interests and make a statement about the vitality of who we are as a community today. That included being active partners in the cultural life of Santa Clara County, and that also includes not just doing it, but making sure the community is aware and welcomed. The Festa, amongst some of our other events are leading the way in this regards, but it is a way of doing business that has to be replicated as we celebrate what is best and exciting about being Italian American. That is a heritage worth harvesting, and your help in bringing in the bounty is going to be actively solicited over the coming new year! 🍷



# Castagne Season

*On an open fire or not, it's a tough nut to crack*

*Percile, Lazio* - And if you don't pierce it before it hits the fire or boiling water, it creates a wicked, messy explosion. But the castagna, the chestnut, is one of Italy's heavenly autumnal offerings.



There are two edible varieties of the Italian chestnut. The castagna which grows in wild abundance along country roads and mountainous regions is suitable for roasting, canning, and boiling. Looking like little porcupines tumbling out of trees, the spiny burrs of the castagne (plural) break open to reveal three polished brown nuts nestled inside. Another variety, the marrone, grows on trees that are cultivated and guarded like family jewels. This highly prized marrone bears a single, much larger and fatter nut used for making the delectable confection called marron glace'.

Italians will speak of a third variety referred to as bastardini, so called because the little bastardi won't open no matter what you do to them.

Throughout history when grain was scarce or prohibitively expensive, the lower classes depended on chestnuts for sustenance. Having twice as much starch as the potato, chestnuts could be ground into flour to produce an unsatisfying but dependable substitute for the staff of life. Especially from the 16th to the 18th centuries, this so-called "tree bread" often kept entire populations from widespread starvation, if not from civil revolt or mayhem.

Mayhem aside, present day Italy erupts into a month long frenzy of chestnut festivals.

Villagers and visiting merrymakers crowd around smoky piazzas where the nuts are roasted in giant-sized pans over raging, lively fires. At the annual festival in Percile, a town 50 miles outside of Rome, several older men flip and stoke until the nuts are almost completely charred. At this point, a large jug of white wine is thrown over the chestnuts, creating an aromatic flambe' and finishing up the task of opening up every nugget. After being cooled slightly, the chestnuts are poured into paper bags and handed to the festival-goers along with a small bottle of fruity, slightly fizzy red wine.

Modern Italian cooks turn out a variety of regional specialties based on chestnuts and chestnut flour. Tuscans love their castagnaccio, a cake with raisins and pine nuts. Families in Parma sit down to tortelli alle castagne, chestnut-filled pasta sprinkled with—you guessed it!—Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese.



Perhaps the most elegant transformation of all is Montebianco (named for the highest mountain in Italy), a luscious cake of chestnut flour and dark chocolate, topped with meringue or whipped cream, an elegant dessert served all over Italy.

The days of tree bread may be long gone, but the pride of place for Italian chestnuts remains. 🍂

*Contributed by Carol Coviello-Malzone, writer, travel consultant, speaker, enthusiastic Rome & Lazio food and travel expert. Carol just published an expanded 2nd edition of her book, FLAVORS OF ROME: How, What & Where To Eat In The Eternal City and spreads her obsessive musings about all things Roman through her website [www.flavorsofrome.com](http://www.flavorsofrome.com)*  
*All photos by Carol Coviello-Malzone.*

## Bocce at Nonno's: Let's Have Some Fun!

IAHF Board member Ralph Di Tullio will continue to host Bocce at Nonno's located in Redwood Estates throughout the season. The enthusiasts meet the first Thursday of the month around the noon hour followed by some post game "analysis" and refreshments at Nonno's Pizzeria. For more information contact Ralph directly at 408 -354-9449. Beginners to advanced, all are welcome and there are two courts going for all levels of play. 🍂



## It Still Happens: Love Springs Eternal

Rome, Italy - Now this is something one tends not to see. Last night at around 10:30 pm, before even entering the *piazza*, you could tell something was afoot due to the saccharine music drifting through the *vicoli* (alleyways). What was taking place on one of the sidewalks of the *piazza*? Nothing but a 100% authentic, old-school, honest-to-goodness, genuine, and most definitely heart-felt... serenade.

Mind you, this is 2010 after all. Forget the accordion, mandolins, and silly straw hats. A serenade is an extreme gamble. If the outcome is negative, not only do you not get your gal, but you're likely to become laughing stock for quite a while, manhood being the stake at play.

And sure enough, if he was going out on a limb - and by his singing (in)-ability out on a limb going he most certainly was - this brave chap was not taking any chances or doing things half-way. He had a microphone in hand plugged into two concert amplifiers running off his parked car battery leads, with an electric guitarist as well as a player on a keyboard-synthesizer thingy rounding out his maximum-impact romancing aural assault strategy.

This being Italy, a sizeable crowd of passerbys and folks from the neighborhood had already joined his already numerous back-up team of friends, following the dictum that nothing around here is ever personal, and privacy (for which there is not even a translation) is a wholly foreign concept. Your business is everyone's business, period, and an event as private, pardon me, as **important** as this was certainly not going to be an exception.

Looking up, you could see the back-lit silhouette of the desired lady in question through her window shutter's slats, and she couldn't have played the part better even if she had had the proper serenadee etiquette behaviour protocol script at her side. By the end of the first song she cracked the shutters open slightly, (round of applause and general nodding all around by the now-nearing 100 person crowd).

After some recompositional throat clearing, *il serenatore* dove head first into the second song (even more syrupy than the first, all about knights in shining armour and princess, etc.), at which point she dramatically flung the shutters open (hearty choruses of "Brava!" shouted by the peanut gallery, arms raised, hands

clapping). Then with her elbows resting on her window sill, she plopped her much pined-for visage (text taken from song two) into her hands and settled in to it all.

Nearing the end of the second song she even flung a rose out the window! The small stadium-sized crowd was by this point really getting warmed up given that the jillion decibels of serenade crooning were wholly drowned out for more than a few moments by unanimous cheering and hollering. And then she disappeared from the window...

End of song two, silence...

Utter silence... That horrible tredipation, everyone-holding-their-breath silence. Even the pigeons stopped flitting about. I mean, when was the last time you DIDN'T hear a peep from 300+ Italians?

The interminable silence seemed to last forever, until a click of a latch was followed by the opening of the enormous apartment building door, and who emerged but..

COMPLETE PANDEMONIUM, MASS HYSTERIA, GENERAL DELIRIUM... APOTHEOSIS!!! You haven't heard this level of cheering around here since Italy last won the World Cup. It would not have been out of place had the crowd broke in to the wave.

The jubilation went on uninterrupted for a good three minutes, during which the now-united couple passionately kissed, occasionally coming up for air. He, basking in the joy of having his beloved in his arms (and displaying the well-deserved peacock-like posturing for an extreme gamble gone well), grinning ear to ear. She, giggling in complete embarrassment, cheeks glowing for the display of love just witnessed.

What was interesting to note was how those in pairs at first inched a bit closer to each other, then began holding hands, hugging, and then abandoning themselves to small kisses of their own, as if by contagion.

The crowd then drifted apart, utterly satisfied by the positive outcome... certainly pondering the wonderful yet incredibly high bar that had just been set. 🍷

Contributed by GB, Editor, Italian Notebook



## Italian Cultural Institute Moves

The Italian Cultural Institute (Istituto Italiano di Cultura) located in San Francisco has moved to 814 Montgomery St. San Francisco, Ca. 94133. The Institute is a major bridge between the Italian Government, its cultural outreach programs and our local Italian American communities. They host programs throughout the year. They currently have a program and exhibit on Maria Callas, and will be hosting a major series on Venice, called "Venice: a crossroads of Culture". For more information about these and similar events you can contact the Institute at [www.iicsanfrancisco.esteri.it](http://www.iicsanfrancisco.esteri.it). The site also has information about scholarships promoted by the Italian government to study Italian in Italy. They also have a new language series and under the auspices of the Consul General of Italy are also spearheading the regional celebration of the founding of the nation of Italy, of which we at the IAHF are active partners. 🍷

## Hello New IAHF Members

Thank you so much for joining and supporting our Italian American Heritage Foundation. We know you will be a great asset to our organization.

We do encourage your new and young ideas to help keep our Italian Heritage going. I know you are all proud of your Italian Heritage, and for the lovers the Italian culture, thank you for your support.

We would like this organization to go forward and we know that you will all want to help us in this endeavor. I know that we will all have fun working toward promoting and preserving the spirit of Our Italian Heritage.

Also, please mark your calendar for our next exciting events. December 9 we will have our Opera. There will also be our fabulous and fun holiday party on December 4th with a great swing band!

Helping out at our gatherings can be a very pleasure experience, meeting and socializing with our members. We are always welcoming volunteers to help at our great events. Also, we do need a co-chairman for our holiday party.

Please contact us by email or telephone if you are interested in volunteering for any of our enjoyable occasions, have any questions or concerns, or you would like to attend our social gatherings. Thank you! - Linda Filice / Membership Chairman

- Membership committee: JoAnn Ghiggeri Bjornstad, Delia Schizzano (VP) and Erik Bean
- Call Linda at (408) 393-6288 for volunteering at the IAHF
- Call or email Rosa at the IAHF - (408) 293-7122 or [iahfsj@iahfsj.org](mailto:iahfsj@iahfsj.org) - for attending events 🍷

## Italian Lessons for Young Students

Beginning in January 2011

- First, Second, & Third Graders: Tuesdays from 4:00-5:00pm
- Fourth, Fifth, & Sixth Graders: Wednesdays from 4:00-5:00PM

Students will learn simple, everyday Italian words, from the seasons of the year and the days of the week, to the animals, food, and objects from the world around them. Students will enjoy expressing themselves using simple Italian expressions.

Class size is limited in number so please sign up ASAP.

For further information contact the instructor at: [caradelia@yahoo.com](mailto:caradelia@yahoo.com).

*Grazie!*



*Congratulations World Champion San Francisco Giants!*

*A Recipe for Creating an*

### **INCREDIBLE THANKSGIVING FEAST**

*featuring*

**Celebrity Chef Joe Rizzi**

•  
November 16, 2010 @ 5:30 PM at Cucina Bambini

•  
*presented by*

**Willow Glen in Motion**

## Grandchildren On The GO!



*Oslo, Norway* - We have some local world champions in our midst. "Jamie and Melissa" are a dynamic duo who have just returned from the Baton Twirling World Championship Competitions, this year in Oslo, Norway from August 4 to 8, 2010. They represented the United States at the event and did the USA proud by returning home with a silver medal in international competitions. Both have won numerous awards within the United States, where under intense competition to represent our country at the event included awards in US National Pairs, solo, individual dance and strut competition. They also place first in the Encore Junior Team event.

Jamie (Hogan) is no stranger to the IAHF being the granddaughter of one of our stellar volunteers Carmella Gullo. She along with her brother Josh have attended many an IAHF event especially the Children's Christmas Parties. Jamie's brother, Josh, has also served at several of our events as part of the Archbishop Mitty High public service crew. I am not sure who is prouder of the siblings, their proud grandparents Joe and Carmella Gullo, who are long time IAHF members or their parents. Darrell and Frances Hogan! We had hoped to have them back from Norway and able to perform at our Festa, but logistically we could not do it this year, but there is 2011!

Melissa the other part of the duo is also a solo majorette twirler at her local high school, and her proud parents are Mr. and Mrs Brandle.

The sport of Baton Twirling is an emerging competition world wide and there is even a push to see Baton Twirling in the Olympics. It combines grace, balance and dexterity, as well as state of the art choreography as

attested by the world class standards and levels of performances in Oslo during this year's international competitions. It also highlights so much of what is positive in today's youth. On behalf of the IAHF we want to congratulate Jamie and Melissa for their world class performance. You are our home town heroines! Remember too, we would love to hear from you about your children or grand children as they do our community proud. - Ken Borelli 🍷

## Discovering the Art and Soul of Italy by Julianne Davidow

The world is filled with beautiful places, both natural and human-made. But certain places call to us more than others: when we go there, we feel a certain ease, as if we've arrived at a long sought-for port. For many people, Italy is one of these places. Here, the beauty and craftsmanship of other times still exist.

The beauty of Italy has always particularly enchanted me. I have plenty of company, of course; Italy has been a focus for travelers and pilgrims for a thousand years. It has the most UNESCO World Heritage Sites of any country in the world, including city centers, palaces, caves, and archaeological sites.

It has a lot of other great things too: the food, the people, the language, the history, opera, the romance and passion, and, of course, the art.

It also has a profound philosophical tradition. We know about the great works of Renaissance art in Italy, but I, like a lot of other people, didn't always know that many of them were inspired by the philosophy that developed in Italy at the same time.

I've always liked reading about religion and philosophy, particularly Eastern philosophy. In the house where I grew up, there was a room we called "The Library," where I would spend hours browsing in the section that held books on different spiritual traditions. Later, at Sarah Lawrence College, I studied comparative religion and literature. I have also been blessed in meeting great spiritual masters, and I have practiced yoga and meditation for many years.

Yet it was Italy that called me, and to Italy that I have continued to return. I first went there in 1990, although the place had been in my mind for a long time before that. When I could finally afford to, I took off on an extended trip. First stop was Venice. For years I had been having dreams with a few Italian words thrown in, although I had never studied the language. Once I even dreamed I was in a room overlooking a canal. Another time in a jewelry shop I saw a small gold charm, a winged lion holding a book, and I immediately bought it. Later I found out that it is the lion of St. Mark, patron saint of Venice, and symbol of the city.

Venice is a miraculous surprise for those arriving for the first time. My first time there I wandered around the city, entranced, for days. My impression hasn't changed. Every time I go there I feel I am enveloped in something magical yet very real, something fleeting, yet eternal.

Since then, I've returned to Italy many times, and lived and worked there as well. An interest in photography developed from my travels, because in Italy there are always images I want to capture. Then I started reading about the great minds of the Italian Renaissance. This

interest grew into a passion and a desire to carry forward, humbly, some of the words and images from this period in history. The result is *Outer Beauty, Inner Joy: Contemplating the Soul of the Renaissance* (Bunker Hill Publishing).

I've never been able to feel an intrinsic part of any particular group, church or organization, being more of a "solitary meditator." But when I started to read about the Italian Renaissance philosophers, who studied many philosophic traditions and incorporated them into their own syncretic philosophy, I felt that they were my spiritual ancestors. They believed in a perennial wisdom, one that transcends religious boundaries. They believed in a fundamental unity behind all creation.

They followed in the footsteps of the Platonists of Alexandria, and in the philosophical system developed there in the third century A.D. by Plotinus and his successors, that has now come to be called Neoplatonism. Alexandria, a multicultural metropolis and the meeting place of East and West, was once home to the greatest library in classical antiquity. Here, a variety of philosophical, spiritual, and scientific traditions combined to create new syntheses. Neoplatonism speaks of a single source from which all existence emanates and with which an individual soul can be mystically united.

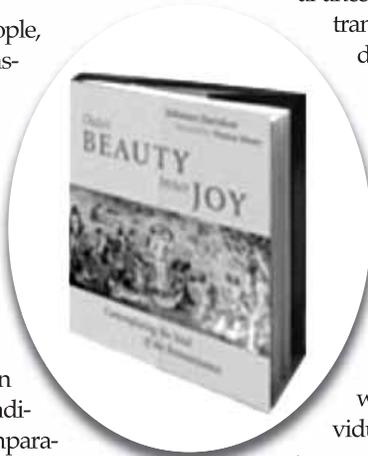
A part of this philosophy deals with love and beauty as a way to experience the divine essence in the world. Renaissance Neoplatonists wrote volumes on love and beauty. They saw love as a spiritual path—love of all kinds, human and divine, could be a way to experience the greater unity of the cosmos. Many of those who were reading these books were also patrons of the arts, and therefore influenced the content of art at the time. So a book filled with beautiful images and words of wisdom from the Italian Renaissance seemed a natural idea.

Beauty is healing. Images penetrate our minds and hearts, and resonate with something deep inside each one of us—that "something" often called the soul. If we can appreciate beauty, then there has to be something in each of us that is beautiful as well, an essence of beauty that is within all things. Simply by seeing a beautiful image our sense of self can be deepened, expanded, transcended.

I hope this book will be a conduit, bringing a spark of the creative energy from the Renaissance to life here and now, and offering a bit of peace, of joy, of inspiration, to those who peruse its pages. ☺

Join Author, Julianne Davidow on Friday, November 12th from 6 pm to 9 pm with her book, "Outer Beauty and Inner Joy."

julianne@juliannedavidow.com • www.juliannedavidow.com • tel: 917-686-2121



## Italian Movie Night at the IAHF

Starting January 2011 on the 2<sup>ND</sup> Thursday of every month.

- Sponsored by the Italian Classes •

Enjoy an evening with your friends and family at the Italian American Heritage watching great Italian movies with English subtitles.

Admission \$5.00 with fresh popcorn. And other treats will be available!



## New IAHF Board Member Linda Filice: Her Vision in Action

New to the IAHF Board, Linda, along with our other new Board members have hit the ground running. If you attended the Festa, Linda chaired our membership booth supported and staffed by other Board members too. We were very fortunate to have many new members sign up thanks to the efforts of our IAHF Board Volunteers. In addition, Linda is organizing a group to decorate an IAHF Holiday Tree at Christmas in the Park in downtown San Jose. Contact Linda at the IAHF if you are interested in helping with the decorations. Linda writes of her vision for the IAHF and how it ties into so many of today's Italian Americans. And where the rubber hit the road was her warm message to our new members that came to the special "green event" from Calabria to California. Her welcoming remarks are a timely acknowledgement not just to our new members but to all those who have supported our foundation and what it represents.

Linda's background is noted as follows:

*My maternal grandmother came from Ct. Ticino and spoke the Swiss dialect, and my paternal grandmother came from Calabria and spoke the Calabrese dialect. Sometimes, I would hear the "pure Italian" when friends visited.*

*I was surrounded by the diversity of the Italian language. This is one reason it was difficult for my brothers and me to master the Italian language growing up. Now I am enrolled in our wonderful Italian class at the IAHF.*

*The diversity of language, as well as other differences, went on and*

*on between my sweet, and to put it mildly, vivacious matriarchs, Nanna (Calabrese grandma) and Nonni (Swiss Italian grandma). They did overcome their differences, and still loved one another. They had their daily café latte together, accompanied by their heated discussions!*

*I absolutely loved them dearly and miss them so much. They really did stand for what "being Italian" is. Their traditions and love of family and friends have been ingrained in my soul.*

*I feel I am truly blessed because I am mixture of all of Italy and can embrace the whole of Italy. I am 1/2 Calabrese, 1/8 Venetian, 1/8 Piemontese, and 1/4 Swiss Italian. I believe that it doesn't really matter from what region a person comes because we are all Italian and should be proud of that.*

*So many of the baby boomers in my generation married spouses of different nationalities. Our children are not 100% Italian, and if our children marry into different cultures, the percentage of Italian in the generations to come lessens. They have become less interested in our Italian culture.*

*If we do not look ahead to help preserve our Italian traditions and all come together, our heritage will dwindle. Our Italian American Heritage Foundation was created so all Italians, and people who love the Italian culture, can come together to preserve and promote our Italian Culture and Traditions.*

*Our goal is to bring together all the Italians from the different regions of Italy, and lovers of the Italian culture, within one foundation. This is what IAHF strives to do. ☺*

## The Italian Musical: A Very Brief History by Cathy Robbins

Music and politics were partners from the beginning of the new Italian nation. Although he was not political, Giuseppe Verdi took his seat as an elected deputy in its first parliament in 1861, and he was known as the composer of the Risorgimento. The roots of much Italian music are in the liturgy of the Middle Ages. Secular music, however, gained a foothold during the Renaissance. Opera started with singing Greek plays, but thanks to Claudio Monteverdi, in the 16th century, Venice became the birthplace of opera as we know it. Also in the 16th century, Italians developed complex choral music.

Music was not immune to the politically charged atmosphere of Renaissance Italy. In 1559, the pro-republican songs of Gadano's *Musica nova* pleased the northern republics and angered the Church.

The next great wave came in the 17th century, the Baroque period. The music of Alessandro Scarlatti and Vivaldi spread across Europe. Vivaldi was a musical and social rebel. An ordained priest, he was the music master to young girls in Ospedale della Pietà in Venice, avoided his priestly duties, lived openly with his "housekeeper" and died impoverished in Vienna. But his works influenced Bach in Germany, and his "Four Seasons" is one of the most recognizable works on the planet.

During this century, the orchestra broke free from its traditional role of accompanying the voice. It expanded in size and instrumentation, Bartolommeo Cristofori developed the fortepiano, which allowed performers to play both loud and soft; it became the modern piano. The Stradivari, Guarneri and Amati families turned violin making into an art.

By the 18th century, Italian composers worked all over Europe. Domenico Scarlatti moved to Spain, for instance. Other important composers were Pergolesi, Boccherini, and Cherubini.

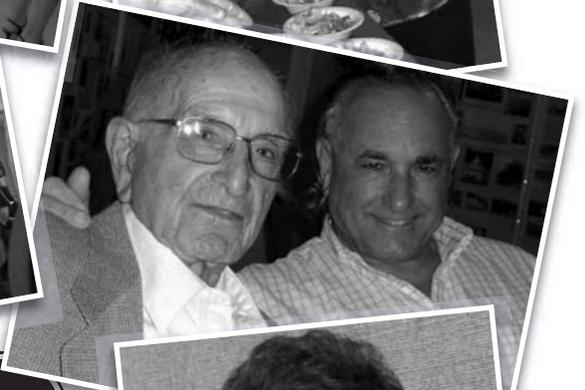
Opera dominated in 19th century Italy, Europe and the United States. Rossini focused on comic opera, but Italians like Donizetti practically invented serious opera. Verdi's persona tragedies ooze out of his works, which have dominated the opera world for nearly a century.

In the 20th century, Puccini's operas included one set in the American West. Other composers like Respighi and Mascagni continued the Romantic tradition, but the avant garde also made headway in the works of Berio, Dallapiccola and Petracchi.

Italian fine art music sings, thanks to the folk and pop tradition in, for instance, Neapolitan songs. In the 20th century, composers found a new venue in Italy's blossoming cinema industry. Ennio Morricone wrote scores for dozens of European and American movies, including Sergio Leone's classic "spaghetti westerns" and Brian dePalma's "The Untouchables." In 2007 he received a special Oscar the first such award to a composer.

Finally, Italian remains the language of music. Composers still use terms like *allegro*, *andante*, *presto*, *crescendo* and *cantabile* etc. when they make music. ☺





*The Party for  
Two Anniversaries  
at the IAHF*

*Mission Chamber Orchestra  
of San Jose: 15th*

*The Birth of  
Modern Italy: 150th*



Photography by John Romano

## The Slow Food Movement is Moving Quickly



Consider the unintended consequences of the Slow Foods movement, from its relatively recent origins in Italy, combined with concerns about buying and eating locally, and our local Santa Clara County scene which has a vibrant and passionate interest in fresh foods and a fascinating workshop was born. On September 26th we brought together gardening sage, Phil Cosentino, Jim Maley and Janet Hamma of the Master Gardeners of Santa Clara County, in partnership with the Western Regional Chapter of the American Italian Historical Association presenting a special work in process by two young college grads from San Francisco State University about documenting slow foods issues from both a rural Italian perspective as well as local home gardeners in the bay area.

A major part of why the IAHF undertook this program was to acknowledge an Italian American influence in this movement as well as celebrate our local scene. Yet the special program also highlighted something very important too, regarding relevancy. At our traditional Italian American social events we do not see many young people yet at the very same time when we get out into our community we experience so many active and cre-

ative Italian Americans carrying their heritage and cultural traditions into mainstream America. This workshop was a good example of that and how the youth of today are able to integrate these values in very creative ways. A whole generation of youth in general are rediscovering their roots though, not only their travels in Italy, but likewise in participating in initiatives similar to the Green movement. As a Heritage Organization part of our job needs to be to acknowledge these achievements, especially within our local communities and find ways to support those creative efforts that are a part of our heritage. I think we do a good job of that in some of the arts and culinary traditions but not necessarily from a broader perspective. The impact of "From Calabria to California" provides valuable insights as to making these connections. An added benefit too is to engage in an ongoing community dialogue relevant to how our value system supports these community-based initiatives. Likewise, especially for our Foundation we also create a special opportunity to expand our experiences for our members and friends. One of our Master Gardener presenters Jim Maley offered to include IAHF members in his next autumn mushroom walk, and more details will follow. Likewise TeriAnn Bengiveno, President of the IAHF will be sharing information about the Western Region's activities. We at the IAHF in turn have included in our newly formed e mail list those interested in attending our cultural and heritage events. Now that is networking! - Janet Hamma

## Peppers & Mushrooms in the South Bay

By Jim Maley – UCCE Master Gardener SCC/Fungus Federation of Santa Cruz

Ken Borelli has asked me to follow up on that talk presented to the IAHF on September 26th. This talk primarily treated peppers, but there was also some information on mushrooms, which I will expand upon, later.

As pointed out in the talk, the world-famous Italian navigator, Christopher Columbus, and members of his crew were primarily responsible for exposing the old world to the wonderful chili pepper after discovering them in the Caribbean. He did not find the sought-after black pepper of South Asia, but rather the more pungent Capsicum sp. Good fortune for sure for Europe and Asia.

Popular peppers of Italy are primarily sweet and mild, but of course there are more pungent varieties from the Calabria region. Probably the most famous sweet Italian pepper is the *Corno di Toro*, which is now available in your better grocery stores and farmers markets. These are very large and come both in red and yellow colors. There uses stuffers and as Bells in salad recipes. Italy has also a number of a wonderful fryer type peppers, which are deliciously sautéed in olive oil and garnished with kosher or sea salt. Probably the most famous of these frying peppers here in America is the Italian heirloom, *Jimmy Nardello*, but locally the *Cuollarici* originally from Tricarico is quite popular in the South Bay. A Spanish, mild variety known as the *Pimento de Padron* is a major hit in Italy and also growing rapidly in popularity here in America. The *Padron* is so popular that the Italian seed company, *Franchi Sementi* ([www.growitalian.com](http://www.growitalian.com)) features it as one of their top sellers.



In this short article, I cannot go through all the details of growing these and other fine peppers from seeds or seedlings. The Master Gardeners of SCC have papers on this subject available for the asking. At the end of this article I will provide information so that you can request details on seed starting and planting peppers in the ground along with other vegetable cultivation subjects.

Our Master Gardener program offers the aforementioned plants and many other wonderful varieties of peppers, tomatoes and herbs/vegetables at the annual Spring Garden Market at History San Jose (part of Kelly Park) on the first Saturday of April from 9 AM to 2 PM.

Now regarding mushrooms, we have the wonderful *Porcini* and other edibles growing here in the coast in areas such as the UC Santa Cruz campus. In mushroom hunting, one first learns of dangerous types and then targets one or two easily recognized edibles and you build from there. This does require going out with experienced mushroom hunters to begin with and this is easily done with the club known as the Fungus Federation of Santa Cruz (FFSC). The FFSC has a very low cost annual family membership but many opportunities for local forays and talks do not require membership. For example, on the second weekend of January every year we hold the Fungus Fair at the Loudon Nelson Center (Center in Laurel- Santa Cruz). This event provides considerable information on local varieties (the good, the bad and the ugly) and so much more including ID support, mushroom 101 lectures and great food including cooking classes. You have not lived until you taste the maple like flavor of Candy Cap Mushroom Gelato via Massimo Caporale. The week prior to the fair, the public is invited to talk with experts and pick specimens for the fair and it's a wonderful way to learn. No experience is necessary for this educational opportunity.

Websites for our Master Gardener and Mycological Groups are as follows: <http://www.mastergardeners.org/sc.html> • <http://www.fungusfed.org/> • <http://scfungusfair.org/>  
For further information on peppers, growing information and mushroom opportunities, please feel free to contact me at: [jmaley@pacbell.net](mailto:jmaley@pacbell.net)

## The Distinctive Direction of Italian Home Fashion

A few months ago, I had the idea of declaring the month of October the month of Italian style. My desire was realized with many events and presentations of Italian Life In Style to Bay Area's stores. One of them was made with Frette store in Stanford Shopping Centre, Palo Alto, CA.

Fashion and home design are two separate disciplines always intertwining and taking oxygen from one another. Since the beginning of time, the human body has determined any project of building. The reflection on the human body has been the vehicle that made people want to paint the body, to dress it, to build cities, to build homes and their interiors and to design our entire surroundings.

The Italian word "abito" (dress) takes from the verb "abitare" (to live, to inhabit). The dress is the first place our body lives in and the body offers infinite possibilities to relate ourselves to the surrounding space. Fashion gives us the freedom and fantasy to dress how we want and the freedom to compose our own style in homes.



To dress a home goes far beyond colors and fabrics, it is the thread, which resolves the human body's architectural spatial challenges and satisfies the human desire to be surrounded by functional and beautiful objects.

Dressing an Italian home interior is quite simple as long as lines and forms are kept at a minimal. As an Italian born, I can say that Italians live in antiquity, we open our windows and history surrounds us, but in our homes we are very modern, we like simple, straight lines and very few bold colors.

A leather red floor would be perfect for a home studio with satin chrome furniture frames mixed with glass, as much as a white/beige striped closet doors would look so elegant on a white marble floor. Play it tone on tone and never go wrong.

Italian kitchens are not at all fussy and functionality is a must. Color is optional, they are either very colorful, we like Ferrari red, by the way, or very black, greige (combination of grey and beige) and rivers of white. In an Italian kitchen forget the kitchen knickknacks all together.



Italian living rooms are made for "fare bella figura" – an Italian philosophy to present a good image, to make a good impression. Our guests, when entering an Italian home, must be greeted by beautiful things and be seated in an even more elegant room, which in some cases, the family hardly uses for themselves just to keep it new as long as possible.

Baths must have the minimal essentials. Take a look at one of the homes in Los Altos, CA, that I staged in the classic contemporary Italian style at: [www.valentinadesigns.com/Staging/LosAltosEntryLivStaging.html](http://www.valentinadesigns.com/Staging/LosAltosEntryLivStaging.html)

Space in Italy is the essence. Italy is a small country, its homes reflect the restriction of space. In comparison with American homes, I must say Italian homes are very small, but they are very fashionable and efficient. If you visit a building with eight apartments, you will see eight different home styles, each one being very creative and "à la page". In one of those eight styles, you will find a classic antique décor too.

Fashion and home design are two sides of the same creative coin, they both thrive on ideas and innovations.

Dress your home according to your character and personalize it as you would put together your fashion ensemble in the morning.

Carry a color scheme from room to room, mix modern with antique pieces, play with patterns, make art out of your memories and cherished moments, show your personality, be extravagant in small spaces, don't forget to decorate cozy outdoor corners and make a "bella figura" with the main entry.

Ciao, Valentina  
Interior Designer ✨

[www.valentinadesigns.com](http://www.valentinadesigns.com)

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Place photo here: Valentina's Face

Valentina Cirasola is an Italian Interior Designer in business since 1990 and a former Fashion Designer. She loves to remodel homes and loves to turn ugly spaces into castles. Being Italian born and raised, Valentina's design work has been influenced by Classicism and stylish, timeless designs. She will create your everyday living with a certain luxury without taking away your comfort.



*Best wishes to Irene Dalis for a speedy recovery. We hope to see you at the Opera event on December 10th.*

*From all your friends at the IAHF*



## Letters to the Editor

Hi Ken,

I want to send a big thank you to everyone at the IAHF who helped make our "Two Anniversaries" celebration a success! Not only did the people who attended and who bid on auction items contribute to the success of the evening, but your

hard work and Rosa's to help organize and set up ahead of time was greatly appreciated. Special thanks also to Norma, Carmella, and Kay for setting and beautifully decorating the tables and hall, and assuring that dinner service ran smoothly. What gems you have helping the IAHF!

On behalf of the Mission Chamber Orchestra, my heartfelt thanks to all, Emily Ray (Conductor and General Director, MCO) 🍷

Caro Amici:

Regarding the *From Calabria to California Green Event*, once again this IAHF showed how "it" is to be done as a follow up to the classy Festa. We were treated to a "super slow food day", great discussions and attendance, savory foods, especially the fresh green salad and a very fair price. Most important, the spirit of the staff is a real joy to behold!  
*Con fratellanza*, Richard Vannucci 🍷

Dear Members of the IAHF,

We shall always remember with deep gratitude your comforting expression of sympathy.

Love, The Pat Restuccia Family 🍷

Ciao Ken,

We just wanted to express our heartfelt appreciation and thanks for the article you wrote about Uncle Al and Aunt Lee in the IAHF newsletter. It really captured their spirits and unique qualities. Well, they sure don't make 'em like that any more. They left such special memories and had a positive impact on so many lives that I am making copies of the article for the family.

By the way, it was my understanding that my dad's other brother, my Uncle Joe De Rose, built the cart with Uncle Al. There may have been others as well. Of course, everyone knows John Di Vincenzi painted it. Even he may have had assistance. I'm thinking one person to ask would be my Aunt Gerry De Rose, Joe's widow. She is the one that donated that delicious panettone to that regional luncheon we helped with. She is 86 now and not always well, but she still has an amazing memory. Who knows what information she could provide about that and other history. I wonder if she has any pictures? Good luck! Hope we will have the pleasure of seeing you around the IAHF.

*Grazie tante*, Clare and Tony Cedolini 🍷

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Editor, IAHF NEWS  
425 N. Fourth St.  
San Jose, CA 95112  
Phone: 408-293-7122  
Fax: 408-293-7154  
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## *Upcoming Events*

### *November, 2010*

- ❧ *Friday, November 12, 6 PM to 9 PM*  
*Outer Beauty, Inner Joy with author*  
*Julianne Davidow*
- ❧ *Saturday, November 20, 7 PM to 10 PM*  
*IAHF Italian Family Festa Fundraiser*
- ❧ *Saturday, December 4, 6 PM to 10 PM*  
*Christmas Dinner Dance*
- ❧ *Friday, December 10, 6 PM to 10:30 PM*  
*23rd Annual World of Italian Opera*
- ❧ *No Luncheons in November or December*

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*The IAHF Wishes All Its  
Friends & Members A  
Very Happy Thanksgiving*

