



AMHS

NOTIZIARIO

CELEBRATING ITALIAN CULTURE & COMMUNITY SINCE 2000

A Publication of the Abruzzo and Molise Heritage Society of the Washington DC Area

September/October 2019



Members, friends and family celebrated the Ferragosto on August 11

FERRAGOSTO 2019

Celebrating Italy's Summer Holiday in DC

By Carmine James Spellane, Treasurer

Historic Fort Ward Park in Alexandria, Va., was transformed into a little bit of Italy on Sunday, August 11, as the AMHS held its annual Ferragosto picnic. Some 35 members, friends and family celebrated the traditional Italian holiday in a covered pavilion festooned with the green, white and red flag of Italy on a warm but comfortable summer day.

Attendees were generous with the food, as there were plenty of delicious savory and sweet dishes, cold drinks and, of course, wine. As Italian music played from a portable speaker, folks swapped stories, caught up with old friends and made new ones. The bocce set was broken out, and some of the crowd enjoyed playing on the not-quite-level grassy area adjacent to the picnic pavilion. The extra challenge did not dampen the enthusiasm of the participants. The Ferragosto picnic always brings out some new faces, and we hope that they enjoyed spending time with the AMHS officers and members. ■

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AMHS NOTIZIARIO

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Color copies printed courtesy of

Todd Tomanio & Sydnee Patterson,

TransPerfect Document Management, Inc.

AMHS NOTIZIARIO is published bi-monthly from January through November. The deadline for the submission of articles is the 15th of the month preceding publication of the issue. Please send submissions via e-mail to Carmine James Spellane, cjsn@verizon.net. All submissions may be edited for clarity and become the property of AMHS. Publication of submissions is at the discretion of the Editor, however content of articles that are published is the sole responsibility of the author.

The **AMHS NOTIZIARIO** is an official publication of the Grant and Scholarship Fund Inc. of the Abruzzo and Molise Heritage Society of the Washington, D.C. area, doing business as The Abruzzo and Molise Heritage Society of the Washington, D.C. area, a non-profit, non-partisan, non-sectarian society legally incorporated in the District of Columbia.

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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear members and friends:

My last message went out on the cusp of summer. This one reaches you as we head toward fall. I hope that the time in between has been an enjoyable and relaxing interval for you.

We did not schedule a general meeting in July in view of our members' summer vacations, travel to Italy, and family gatherings. However, a good number of us did get together on the 28th of that month at Osteria da Nino in Arlington, Virginia, where we had a great lunch and a very good time. Our society's first intern, Julia Paola, was among those in attendance, as were her parents, which provided an unexpected treat.

We held our annual Ferragosto picnic on Sunday, August 11, at Fort Ward Park in Alexandria, Virginia. The park, a historic Civil War site, offered a great backdrop for members and guests who enjoyed food, drink, music and bocce ball. The turnout was good and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves. Mother Nature did her part by supplying gorgeous weather for the day.

Next up on our schedule is our general meeting on September 22 at Casa Italiana. It is taking place on the same weekend as the 2019 Vespa Rally of Washington, D.C. and will offer a luncheon for rally participants who are not yet ready to depart Washington, who are anxious for a good meal, and who would like to meet AMHS members and friends. Our guest speaker will be Willy Meaux, Chair of the Vespa Committee of Washington, D.C. and an expert on the Vespa (among other things). Willie will touch on the origins of the Vespa, its popularity throughout the world, and its iconic status as a symbol of Italian post-war culture.

Our society is an official sponsor of the rally, and we will be part of the crespelle breakfast ceremony on Saturday morning honoring Corradino d'Ascanio, the Italian engineer (from Abruzzo) who designed the first Vespa in 1946. AMHS members and guests are welcome and invited to attend. There will also be a representative from the Italian Embassy present, as well as Panfilo D'Angelo, President of the Vespa Club of Sulmona, Abruzzo. We have also invited Mr. D'Angelo to attend our general meeting on Sunday, if his schedule permits.

Our September meeting will also introduce the society's 2018-2019 Scholarship winners to our members and guests. The winners, Kathryn Donati and Francesca Minicozzi, will also each deliver brief remarks on their relationship with Italy, their interest in the Italian language and culture, their studies, and the importance of the scholarship to their academic pursuits.

Regarding the rally weekend, I would be remiss if I didn't mention two other events. There will be a barbecue on Friday evening (5:30 to 7:30) at La Moto on Wilson Blvd. in Arlington, Va. It will feature "arrosticini abruzzesi" as well as drinks. On Saturday evening, at the Courtyard Marriott (901 L Street, NW), Tony Richards, a guitarist and recording artist who has maternal roots in Abruzzo, will perform from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. A limited number of tickets remain available (ticket cost is \$25).

It is my hope that many of you will attend our general meeting on Sunday, September 22. In addition, I encourage you to attend at least one of the Vespa Rally events on that weekend to support another organization promoting the Italian-American community in Washington, D.C.

Finally, I want to mention that we have at least one opening on our Board of Directors. If you are looking for a chance to become more active in our organization and make a difference, this might be the right opportunity. If you are interested, please let me know or contact Maria D'Andrea-Yothers.

Enjoy the fall and I'll see you in September.

Best regards,
Ray LaVerghetta

CELEBRATING THE VESPA

SEPTEMBER PROGRAM CAPS RADUNO RALLY WEEKEND

By Nancy DeSanti, 1st Vice President - Programs

Our fourth program for the year will be all about the Vespa, that iconic symbol of Italy, and it's one you won't want to miss. Our program will take place on Sunday, September 22, 2019, at 1:00 p.m. at Casa Italiana.

Our AMHS luncheon meeting will be part of the Raduno, "the Vespa Rally of the Nation's Capital," a three-day weekend event for everyone who loves the Vespa. This year, the AMHS is a sponsor of the Raduno. The weekend kicks off Friday evening, September 20, with an arrosticini barbecue at the La Moto Vespa dealership in Arlington, Va. The next day there is a breakfast at Casa Italiana, and that evening there will be a concert featuring Tony Richards, a virtuoso guitarist and recording artist from Chicago whose mother is Abruzzese. The concert will be at the Courtyard Marriott Ballroom, 901 L St., N.W., Washington, D.C. After the concert, Vespisti can enjoy a ride around the city to view the illuminated monuments at night.



D'Ascanio with millionth Vespa produced

If anyone would like additional information on the rally or our September 22 general meeting, please check out the Rally website <http://vespa-committee.org/rally-features> and the AMHS website: www.abruzzomoliseheritagesociety.org/mission/events/#!event/2019/9/22/amhs-general-society-meeting-1

We will be highlighting the fact, not as well known as it should be, that the inventor of the

Vespa in 1946 was Corradino D'Ascanio, an Abruzzese. D'Ascanio was from the small town of Popoli in the province of Pescara.

We are pleased to announce that our speaker will be AMHS member Willy Meaux, a true Vespa aficionado who has many friends and contacts among the Vespisti in the Washington, D.C. area and elsewhere. Willy is also a member of the board of directors of the Casa Italiana Sociocultural Center. On a recent trip to Italy, he presented a letter from AMHS President Ray LaVerghetta to the president of the Sulmona Vespa Club, Panfilo D'Angelo, inviting him to be our special guest at the September 22 program. He has accepted our invitation and will make a few remarks during the meeting. The Sulmona Vespa Club is a chapter of the Vespa Club of Italy.

Willy will also show us a short documentary on the amazing life of Corradino D'Ascanio and the invention of the Vespa. It turns out that D'Ascanio had an early passion for flight and design. By the age of 15, after studying flying techniques and the ratio between weight and wingspan of certain birds, he built an experimental glider which he would launch from the hills near his hometown. After becoming an aeronautical engineer, D'Ascanio went on to invent the award-winning first modern helicopter.

By 1932, he had joined the Piaggio company. At the end of World War II, D'Ascanio designed, at the request of Enrico Piaggio, a motor scooter that achieved incredible success and became the symbol of post-war reconstruction. The Vespa was a simple and economical vehicle, a means of transportation for the average Italian family, and it was an immediate success.

The Vespa ("wasp" in Italian) was so named for its shape and its aerodynamic and nimble structure, and it was his most popular creation. The Vespa was shown for the first time at the "salone del ciclo e del motociclo" in Milan in 1949, becoming the most popular worldwide scooter for the next 50 years (more than 16 million sold in over 130 different models). Attendees at the Bella Italia Market in December may recall the beautiful models displayed at Casa Italiana, on loan from La Moto dealership in Arlington, including the famous Aprilia.

Whipping through the streets on this simple, elegant and robust piece of automotive engineering



The Vespa was shown for the first time at the "salone del ciclo e del motociclo" in Milan in 1949, becoming the most popular worldwide scooter for the next 50 years.

gave riders a sense of freedom. Like all Italian inventions, it was conceived with aesthetics in mind. It was designed to cover the engine and shield the legs from rain, mud and oil, and it appealed to the style-conscious Italian public.

It was popularized outside Italy when in 1953, Audrey Hepburn rode sideways on Gregory Peck's Vespa in the film "Roman Holiday." Later that decade, John Wayne, Dean Martin and Marlon Brando were photographed zipping around film sets on Vespas.

Attendees at our meeting will enjoy looking at photos taken at "Bici e Baci," the Vespa museum in Rome. The photos were taken in Rome this summer by Casa Italiana community member Teresa Forcina.

The program will feature a delicious lunch catered by Fontina Grille. Please be sure to invite your family members and friends to what is sure to be a very interesting and fun event. Paid reservations are due by September 18, 2019.

For more information, please see the flyer on page 11 of this issue. ■

Music of Bella Italia

Acclaimed Folger Consort's Season Features Several Periods of Italian Music

By Nancy DeSanti

Did you know Niccolò Machiavelli, besides being the author of "The Prince," was a musical composer as well? Many people are probably not aware of this side of the famous political philosopher, who was also a humanist, poet, and playwright at a time when Florence was full of great musicians.

To show the musical aspect of his genius, the Folger Shakespeare Library is starting off its fall 2019/2020 season with a program entitled "Music for Machiavelli: Florence Circa 1500." It's the first in the "Bella Italia" series of five programs which will highlight early Italian music.

Music for Machiavelli includes 4 concerts of Italian early music performed by Folger Consort over the September 27-29 weekend, at St. Mark's Episcopal Church on Capitol Hill. For AMHS members, Folger's marketing manager, Peter Eramo (whose heritage is Abruzzese), is offering a special discount for the Machiavelli concerts. Instead of the \$42 regular ticket price, AMHS members can buy tickets for \$30 by going to the website www.folger.edu/events/music-for-machiavelli and using the promo code ITALIANA30.

The Folger's five programs are:

Music for Machiavelli: Florence circa 1500

September 27 - 29, 2019



The author of "The Prince" walked the streets of Florence 500 years ago. A true Renaissance man — philosopher, playwright, diplomat, and composer, he wrote carnival songs (canti carnavaleschi) for the Medici family and music for his two comedic stage plays. Folger Consort Artistic Directors Robert

Eisenstein and Christopher Kendall have planned a wonderful program of works by Alexander Agricola, Alessandro Coppini, Bartolomeo dell'Organo, and the Flemish composed favored by the Medicis, Heinrich Isaac.

Gloria! A Baroque Italian Christmas

December 13 - 18, 2019

Folger Consort will present 8 concerts during this Christmas season, journeying to Venice with Vivaldi's much-loved Gloria. Other seasonal music from the Italian High Baroque includes Alessandro Scarlatti's Christmas Cantata ("O di Betlemme altera, povertà venturosa") and Corelli's magnificent Christmas Concerto.

Palestrina's Perfect Art with Stile Antico

February 7 - 8, 2020 at
Washington National Cathedral

The great nave of Washington National Cathedral is the perfect setting for the transcendent ars perfecta of Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina and other composers of the late Italian Renaissance.

The Three Fountains: Music for Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio

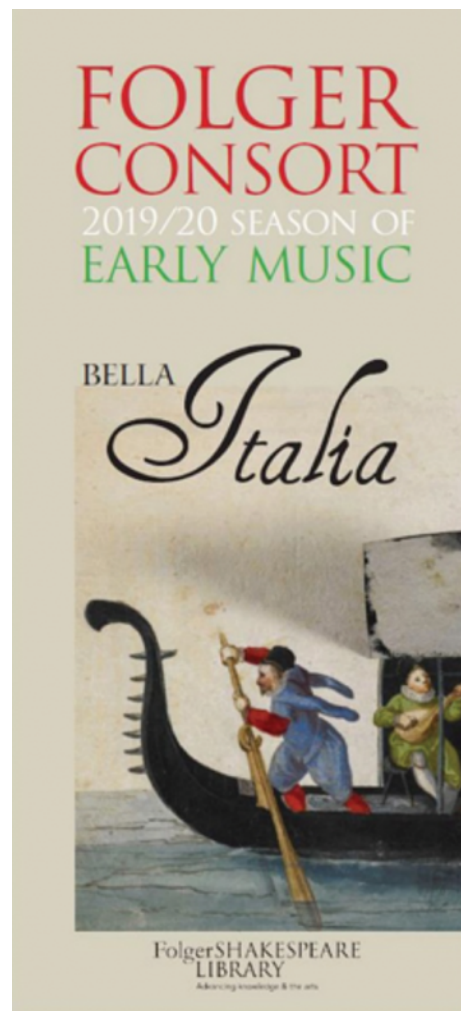
March 6 - 8, 2020

The lyrical art of Trecento composers was inspired by the poets known as Italy's Three Fountains: Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio. Musicians such as Gherardello da Firenze, Jacopo da Bologna, and Francesco Landini excelled in setting the poetry of these masters in a graceful and melodic style that was different from the music of their contemporaries.

Monteverdi in Venice: The Birth of the Baroque

April 24 - 26, 2020

Just as Beethoven is the giant figure presiding over the transition from the Classical to the Romantic, Monteverdi is the great composer standing astride the transition from the Renaissance to the Baroque. Featured are Monteverdi's madrigals, selections from his operas, as well as his rousing setting of Torquato Tasso's *Il combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda*, first performed in Venice in 1624.



The concerts will be performed by the Folger Shakespeare Consort, the early music ensemble-in-residence at the Folger Shakespeare Library which specializes in music from the medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque periods.

Any AMHS members who are interested in going as a group to the "Music for Machiavelli" concert, please contact Nancy DeSanti at ndesanti7@gmail.com.

Give the Gift of
MEMBERSHIP!

For details visit **Become a Member** on
www.abruzzomoliseheritagesociety.org.



SIAMO UNA FAMIGLIA

AMHS Member Recalls Work on Apollo 11 Project

By Joann Novello

The fiftieth anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing triggered many memories for those of us who lived during that historic moment, but perhaps to no one more than AMHS member Joe Novello, who worked on the support system for the project.

In 1955, Joe as a young boy arrived in the United States from Montazzoli, Abruzzo, Italy, with his family. The move offered the promise of a life of opportunity in the New World, especially to this boy with big dreams. In the fourteen short years from the time of his emigration until his contribution to Apollo 11, Joe excelled in school and accepted a coveted position with NASA at the Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Md. At Goddard, he wrote the program that directed the antenna to track the Gemini and Apollo spacecrafts. He fulfilled his dream by participating in that "giant leap for mankind" on July 21, 1969.

In his unassuming assessment, Joe says that he was "lucky" and "at the right place at the right time, with the right skill set and the right attitude" to be able to do his part in the success of the program. Not everyone shares that modesty, though; most who know Joe express great pride in his 40 year NASA career, and, in particular his role in Apollo 11. Joe's second cousin and childhood companion, Renato Novello, who still resides in Montazzoli, was asked by a reporter from "Il Messaggero" to offer his view of Joe's success. He indicated that he always expected great things from his relative and schoolmate. A cousin in the U.S., Tony Novello, contacted Joe as the anniversary approached, recalling his memories of family talk of Joe's NASA career. Tony acknowledged "how Joe contributed to this miracle of man's accomplishments. My father, Lorenzo, [Joe's father's second cousin] was very proud of Joe's contribution ... to this miraculous achievement that he had a part of."

AMHS Membership

By Lynn Sorbara, 2nd Vice President, Membership

We are pleased to report that the option to renew your membership online has been simplified. We now have a new drop-down box under Membership, on the AMHS website "Manage Your Account" (see www.abruzzomoliseheritagesociety.org/manage-account/#account/manage). From here, you enter your email address and password (if you've forgotten your password, you can request that it be emailed to you). Your membership profile will populate, and you are given the option to renew, upgrade, or update your billing. We hope you will take advantage of this feature!

NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome is extended to: Joseph Breda and Alicia Fawcett.

BIRTHDAYS

Compleanni a Settembre

Mary Ellen Allegrino and Bruno Fusco, September 2; Richard DiBuono, September 3; Anthony Phillips, September 4; Sharon Callahan, Anthony D'Erme, and Lina Marinucci, September 5; Corrado Dal Forno, September 6; Michael A. DeMarco, September 7; Barbara Verdile, Richard Stonestreet, and Maria Marigliano, September 8; Tom Savage, September 15; Rose Napolitano, September 18; Theresa Duncan, September 19; Mary Filippetti Markey and Joan Piccariello, September 22; Robert Verdile, September 15; Olimpia Micheli, September 27; Jeffrey Clark, Romeo Sabatini, and Maria LaVerghetta, September 29.

Compleanni a Ottobre

Nicola Pellegrini, October 1; Eugene Robert Giammittorio, October 4; Elizabeth DiGregorio, Charlie Iovino, and Kirsten Keppel, October 8; Gianluca Nigro, October 10; John Fusciello, October 11; Irena DiCarlantonio, October 12; Guy Caruso, October 21; Sarah Scott, October 22; Antonietta McDonald and Louis Alfano, October 26; Thomas Stallone, October 27; and Teresa Forcina, October 29.

ANNIVERSARIES

Anniversari a Settembre

Mary & Jeffrey Petrino, September 1; Teresa & Gianpiero Forcina, September 3; Sergio & Maria Fresco, September 6; John & Lucille Fusciello and Matthew & Amelia DiFiore, September 16.

Anniversari a Ottobre

Joseph & Mary Katherine Theis and John & Eileen Verna, October 3; Frank Charles & Susan Ann Bonsiero, October 6; Rocco Del Monaco & Eileen Parise, October 9; Alfred & Diana DelGrosso and Porter & Dianne Francesconi Lyon, October 14; Joseph & Rose Ruzzi Sr., October 19; Michael & Antonietta McDonald, October 28; and Salvatore & Anna Maria DiPilla, October 30.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Category	# of Persons
Associate (Couple)	2 x 2 = 4
Associate (Individual)	30
General (Couple)	56 x 2 = 112
General (Individual)	85
Honorary	5
Student	2
Total Membership:	238



CAMPLI

PROVINCE OF TERAMO, REGION OF ABRUZZO

By Nancy DeSanti

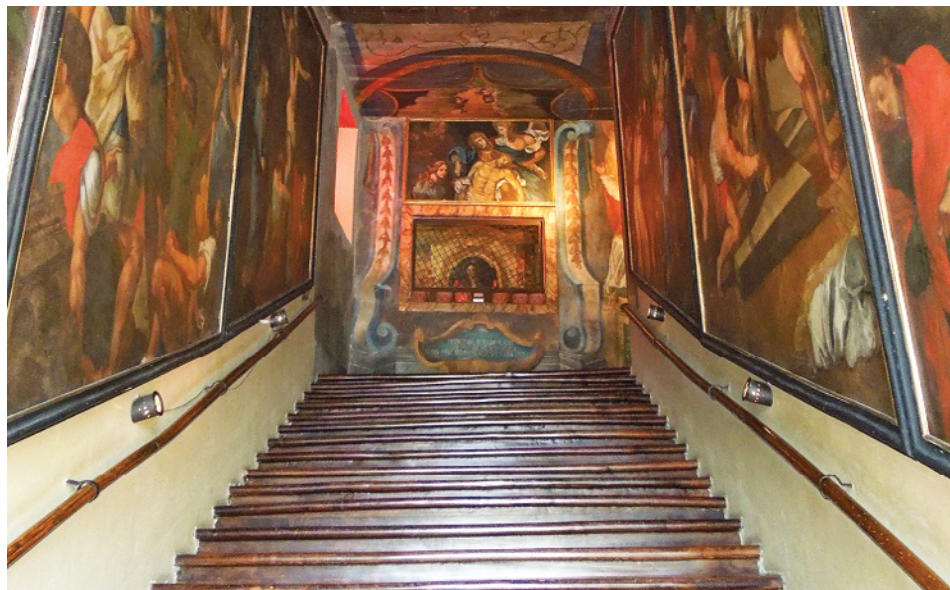
Campli, one of Abruzzo's beautiful small towns, is located in the natural park known as the Gran Sasso e Monti della Laga National Park. The park is one of the most biologically diverse areas of Europe, with more than 2,000 plant species and many types of animals and birds. The town has approximately 7,110 inhabitants, known as Camplesi.

Situated on a hill between the two valleys of the rivers Fiumicino and Siccagno, Campli is a center of artistic and religious interest. It has a wonderful historical center with many fine 15th century houses, including the unique Casa del Medico, one of the most significant monuments of the town.

Nearby Campovalano, with a necropolis of the late Bronze Age, testifies to the antiquity of the human presence in the area.

The name Campli first appears in documents of the 9th century A.D., and it is mentioned in a 12th century catalogue as the property of Roberto, Count of Aprutio. In 1538, the town was given by Emperor Charles V to his daughter Margaret of Austria as a present for her wedding to Ottavio Farnese, and it belonged to the powerful Farnese family up to the early 18th century.

One of the most important sites in Campli is the Sanctuary of Scala Santa, a place of worship built between 1772 and 1776 which opened in May 1776. Visitors would pray while climbing the 28 wooden steps (leading to the chapel of Sancta Sanctorum) on their knees in order to obtain the plenary indulgence for the absolution of sins, thus cleansing the soul. This was



The 28 wooden steps of Scala Santa

an imitation of the famous Scala Santa in Rome. The opportunity to obtain a plenary indulgence was granted by an edict issued by Pope Clement XIV in 1772.

The structure of the building is similar to that of the Scala Santa in Rome. From the landing connecting the two staircases, it is possible to see the Sancta Sanctorum with the altar of Cristo Salvator Mundi through a grate. The walls of the landing are decorated with two frescos illustrating Pope Clement XIV and Saint Helena Empress, mother of Emperor Constantine the Great.

Another interesting site is the National Archaeological Museum of Campli, inaugurated in 1989 and housed in the convent next to the 17th-century Church of St. Francis. The museum is directly connected to the nearby Necropolis of Campovalano, where, as has been discovered over the course of about 40 years of research, there are 610 burials from the Iron and Romanization Age (4th to 3rd century B.C.). The museum's exhibitions illustrate the evolution of the funerary rite of the Middle-Adriatic or Piceno cultural heritage.



Treasures from the National Archeological Museum

The most ancient funerary monuments are characterized by large mounds with stone circles. Also displayed at the museum are the weapons and bronze pottery of the Etruscan tradition.

Campli also maintains its folk traditions. Every year since 1964 during the month of August, there is a celebration that goes by the name of Sagra della porchetta itolica (Feast of Italian Pork). It is considered to be the first such event established in the region of Abruzzo and one of the earliest organized anywhere in Italy. One of the highlights of the festival is a pork sandwich cook-off. The festival was founded as a way to attract visitors. As such, the Sagra della porchetta itolica was an immediate success, drawing crowds of up to 10,000 people attending in the mid-1960s. ■



Panoramic view of Campli

CAMPLI

PROVINCIA DI TERAMO, REGIONE ABRUZZO

What to See

- The Museo Archeologico Nazionale, in the former Convento di San Francesco, with remains from Campovalano (7th to 5th century B.C.), a celebrated Etruscan necropolis
- Palazzo del Parlamento, a medieval building which is now the official seat of the municipality
- Church of Santa Maria in Platea, from the 14th century, with a Romanesque bell tower, three aisles and a typical wooden roof, a 17th-century canvas by local artist G.B. Boncori, a Renaissance altar with a statue by Silvestro dell'Aquila (1495) between two 16th-century paintings by Cola dell'Amatrice and, in the sacristy, a fine painting on wood with a rare picture of Mary with the Child Jesus
- Church of San Francesco, from the 14th century, with another beautiful painting by Cola dell'Amatrice
- Chiesa di S. Pietro, near Campovalano, founded in the 8th century and rebuilt in the 13th century, which contains ancient Roman and medieval stone fragments and a precious Roman sarcophagus.

Important Dates

- **May 10** — Feast of Saint Pancras, the patron saint
- **July 26-31** — Sagra Gastronomica at nearby Sant'Onofrio
- **August 22** — Sagra della Porchetta Italiana
- **Sept. 1** — Celebration of the Virgin Mary

Translated by Maddalena Borea

Campoli, un piccolo centro della regione Abruzzo, si trova nei pressi del parco del Gran Sasso e del parco nazionale Monti della Laga. Questi parchi offrono circa 2,000 specie diverse di piante, di animali e di uccelli. Il centro abitato conta circa settemila abitanti, chiamati e conosciuti come Camplesi.

Situata su una collina sulle sponde dei fiumi Fiumicino e Siccagno, Campoli è un interessante centro artistico, religioso, archeologico e storico, con case risalenti al quindicesimo secolo, tra le quali La Casa Del Medico, interessante monumento. Nella vicina Campovalano una necropoli dell'età del Bronzo conferma l'antichità della presenza dell'uomo in questa regione.

Il nome di questa cittadina appare per la prima volta in documenti del nono secolo dopo Cristo, e in un catalogo del dodicesimo secolo, come proprietà di Roberto, Conte di Apriuto. Nel 1538 l'Imperatore Carlo V donò Campoli in dote a sua figlia Margherita d'Austria, quando questa sposò Ottavio Farnese, rampollo della potentissima famiglia Farnese, ed appartenne a questa famiglia fino al diciottesimo secolo.

Una delle attrazioni di Campoli è il Santuario della Scala Santa, luogo di preghiera e di penitenza, inaugurato nel maggio del 1776. I pellegrini vi si recavano e salivano i ventotto gradini di legno in ginocchio, in segno di penitenza e di purificazione dai peccati, in imitazione della Scala Santa di Roma. L'opportunità di ottenere un'indulgenza plenaria era stata offerta precedentemente in un editto di Clemente quattordicesimo nel 1772.

Anche la struttura dell'edificio di Campoli è simile a quella della Scala Santa di Roma. Dalla Scala di Campoli è possibile vedere l'altare con il Cristo, Salvatore del mondo, attraverso una grata. Interessanti anche i suoi affreschi di Clemente XIV e dell'imperatrice Sant'Elena, madre di Costantino il Grande.

Il centro archeologico di Campoli, con un vero e proprio museo, si trova nei pressi di un convento, accanto alla chiesa di San Francesco. Questo centro fu inaugurato nel 1989, ed è connesso alla necropoli di Campovalano, che conferma l'antichità di questa regione. Antiche armi, vasi di bronzo, stili funerari del centro archeologico echeggiano anche tradizioni etrusche.

Campoli mantiene ancora le sue antiche tradizioni, come quella della porchetta italiana, celebrata a metà agosto, ogni anno. Considerata una delle più antiche sagre d'Italia, fu stabilita per attrarre visitatori ed ebbe successo. Nel 1960 attrasse più di diecimila visitatori. ■

Attrazioni del luogo:

- Il museo archeologico nei pressi del convento di San Francesco.
- Il palazzo del Parlamento, edificio medievale. Oggi è il Comune di Campoli.
- La chiesa di Santa Maria in Platea, del quattordicesimo secolo col suo campanile romanico.
- La chiesa di San Francesco del quattordicesimo secolo, con un dipinto di Cola dell'Amatrice.
- La chiesa di San Pietro nei pressi di Campovalano, dell'ottavo secolo, ricostruita nel tredicesimo secolo

Date da ricordare:

- **10 maggio** — La festa di San Pancrazio, Santo Patrono
- **26-31 giugno** — La festa gastronomica nella vicina Sant'Onofrio.
- **22 agosto** — Sagra della Porchetta Italiana

Sources:

en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Campoli

www.italyheritage.com/regions/abruzzo/teramo/campoli.htm

abruzzoturismo.it/en/national-archaeological-museum-campoli-te



PORTOCANNONE

PROVINCE OF CAMPOBASSO, REGION OF MOLISE

By Nancy DeSanti

The picturesque small town of Portocannone is located about 50 kilometers northeast of Campobasso. The town has approximately 2,490 inhabitants, known as Portocannonesi.

First recorded in the 11th century A.D. with the name Portocandesium, by 1320 its name was changed to Porto Caduni. This small town was heavily damaged by an earthquake in 1456 that destroyed most of the houses and killed half of the population.

Portocannone is notable for being a small Arbëreshë town. The Arbëreshë are a linguistic and ethnic Albanian minority community who have managed to preserve their language and cultural heritage. They arrived in southern Italy during the 15th century following their Albanian national hero Giorgio Castriota Skanderbeg (1405-1468). A Slavic community led by Skanderbeg was invited to populate the area because of their repression by the Ottoman Empire. They were offered refuge by the Kingdom of Naples and the Kingdom of Sicily (both under Aragonese rule), where the Arbëreshë were given their own villages and protected, in Molise and various areas in southern Italy.

Skanderbeg was an Albanian nobleman and military commander who led a rebellion against the Ottoman Empire in what is today Albania, North Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia. As a young man, Skanderbeg was a hostage at the Ottoman court for 20 years, where he was educated and eventually entered into the service of the Ottoman sultan for 20 years. But he later switched sides and because of his military skill, he was named a commander and was able to bring together Albanians of different regions and dialects.

Skanderbeg's exploits presented a major obstacle to Ottoman expansion, and he was considered by many in western Europe to be a model of Christian resistance against Muslims (he was originally Eastern Orthodox but he converted to Catholicism). For 25 years, Skanderbeg's 10,000-man army marched through Ottoman territory winning against consistently



Portocannone overview



Portocannone panorama

larger and better-supplied Ottoman forces, for which he was greatly admired.

Skanderbeg recognized the sovereignty of the Kingdom of Naples over Albania, and he supported King Ferdinand I of Naples. In 1463, he became the chief commander of the crusading forces of Pope Pius II, but the Pope died while the armies were still gathering. Together with Venetians, he fought against the Ottomans until his death in 1468. He ranks high in military history, as the most persistent and successful opponent of the Ottoman Empire in its heyday.

The trouble Skanderbeg gave the Ottoman Empire's military forces was such that when the Ottomans found the grave of Skanderbeg in the church of St. Nicholas in Lezhë, they opened it and made amulets of his bones, believing that these would confer bravery on the wearer.

A palace in Rome in which Skanderbeg resided during his 1466-67 visits to the Vatican is still called Palazzo Skanderbeg and currently houses the Italian museum of pasta. The palace is located in Piazza Scanderbeg, between the Fontana di Trevi and the Quirinal Palace. Also in Rome, a statue by Florentine sculptor Romano Romanelli is dedicated to the Albanian hero in Piazza Albania. Monuments or statues of Skanderbeg have also been erected in towns in southern Italy where there is an Arbëreshë community. In 2006, a statue of Skanderbeg was unveiled on the grounds of St. Paul's Albanian Catholic Church in Rochester Hills, Michigan — the first statue of Skanderbeg to be erected in the United States.

Recently, some linguistic experts have been studying languages that are in danger of dying out. A book has even been written of Albanian

folklore and language from the local dialect spoken in Portocannone. The volume, by Gjaku Jonë i Shëprishur, is a collection of distinct genres, from soothing lullabies to playful rhymes and somber rituals and the book comes with recordings that allow one to hear the extent to which more than 500 years of contact with Italian has shaped this unique Albanian dialect.

In recent times, natural gas production began in the nearby Colle di Lauro which comes uniquely from the Portocannone field, discovered in 1963. Following the first well, production was subsequently expanded by drilling 28 more wells. The production coming from the Portocannone wells is collected by means of a network of flow lines which channel the gas to a treatment and compression facility located in nearby Piane di Larino. ■

What to See

- Church of Saints Peter and Paul, from the 16th century

Important Dates

- Pentecost — Feast of the Madonna of Costantinopoli, the patron saint escription

Sources:

en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portocannone
www.enchantingitaly.com/regions/molise/province-campobasso/portocannone.htm
www.trover.com/d/RRzV-portocannone-italy
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skanderbeg

PORTOCANNONE

PROVINCIA DI CAMPOBASSO, REGIONE MOLISE

Translated by Maddalena Borea

Il pittoresco paesino di Portocannone si trova a 50 km. da Campobasso. Conta circa 2500 abitanti, conosciuti come Portocannonesi.

La popolazione, di origine albanese, conserva ancora oggi costumi ed espressioni linguistiche proprie del paese d'origine.

Intorno all'undicesimo secolo dopo Cristo era Portocandesium, e, più tardi, verso il 1320, si chiamò Porto Caduni. Il severo terremoto del 1456 distrusse buona parte delle sue case e uccise buona parte dei suoi abitanti.

La popolazione, di origine albanese, conserva ancora oggi costumi ed espressioni linguistiche proprie del paese d'origine. Molti albanesi si stanziarono in sud Italia, al seguito del loro eroe, Giorgio Castriota Skanderberg (1405-1468), perché trovarono ospitalità in territori del Regno di Napoli, di Sicilia e di altre aree del sud, a quel tempo sotto gli Aragonesi. In Molise, in particolare, questi gruppi riceverono terre e protezione.

Skanderberg, nobile albanese e comandante militare, guidò persistenti ribellioni contro l'impero Ottomano in territori conosciuti oggi come Albania, Nord Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro e Serbia. Da giovane fu educato e fu al servizio di un sultano alla corte dell'impero ottomano, ma più tardi cambiò campo, e, date le sue abilità militari, riuscì a unificare Albanesi di diverse regioni e di diversi dialetti al suo comando.

Diventò in breve tempo un grandissimo ostacolo alle espansioni dell'impero ottomano, e fu modello di resistenza cristiana contro i musulmani. Di religione cristiano-ortodossa, si convertì in seguito al cattolicesimo, e, per 25 anni lottò e sfidò con i suoi 10,000 soldati truppe ottomane ben armate.

Riconobbe la sovranità del regno di Napoli sull'Albania ed appoggiò re Ferdinando I. Combatté contro gli Ottomani fino alla sua morte nel 1468, e questi lo odiarono a tal punto che quando scoprirono la sua tomba nella chiesa di San Nicola a Lezhe, la vandalizzarono, e delle sue ossa fecero amuleti.

Un palazzo a Roma, nelle vicinanze del Vaticano, dove egli risiedeva per un paio di anni, si chiama palazzo Skanderbeg ed è oggi il museo della pasta. Una statua dello scultore fiorentino Romanelli è dedicata a lui, e si trova in Piazza Albania, ed un'altra si trova anche in Michigan.

Oggigiorno alcuni studiosi di linguistica hanno prodotto delle pubblicazioni e dei glossari allo scopo di preservare l'antico linguaggio, le antiche nenie di gente albanese, che venne nell'antichità, al comando del loro eroe, a popolare aree come Portocannone, dove in anni recenti sono stati scoperti giacimenti di petrolio. ■

Attrazioni del luogo:

- Chiesa di San Pietro e Paolo del sedicesimo secolo

Date da ricordare:

- Pentecoste, Festa della Madonna di Costantinopoli

THIS IS YOUR NOTIZIARIO

By Carmine James Spellane, Editor

The Notiziario belongs to all of us, and we want to hear from you.

The AMHS is much more than just its meetings. We are a vibrant society of people who care about their heritage and want to learn more. And all of us have stories to tell. We encourage you to submit articles for the newsletter to tell yours. It could be about a recent trip to Italy, honors received by you or your family, milestones such as significant birthdays or anniversaries, reviews of books on Italian topics, or recipes, to name but a few ideas.

All articles can be emailed to abruzzo-moliseheritagesociety@gmail.com to my attention. As editor, I will carefully review each submission and edit as needed. Please understand that publication of any article is subject to space available and the appropriate nature of the content, but we will make every effort to use your work and photos.

The AMHS is making new efforts to engage our current members and add more to our ranks. A vibrant Notiziario is part of that. As our society approaches its 20th anniversary next year, let's all help ensure a bright future for our mission to celebrate "all things Italian." ■



The AMHS Shop

Please make sure to check out the cool merchandise AMHS has to offer:

"Traditional Cuisine of Abruzzo and Molise" cookbook (2nd printing) **\$5.00**

Buon Appetito Chef's Apron **\$20.00**

T-Shirts **\$20.00**

- Men's sizes:
S / M / L / XL; Crew neck;
50% cotton/ 50% polyester
- Women's sizes:
S / M / L / XL; V-neck;
90% cotton/10% polyester

AMHS Tote Bag **\$30.00**

17" W x 6" D x 13½" H;
bottom 12" W; handle drop 9";
100% durable cotton fabric



This year, we are pleased to offer our newest merchandise item, the AMHS baseball cap

NEW

AMHS Baseball Caps **\$15.00**

We offer merchandise through these outlets:

- At bi-monthly AMHS general society meetings;
- online through the society's website at AMHS Shop.

Online payments can be made using Visa or Mastercard. There is a handling fee to cover postage for merchandise sold online or ordered through the mail.

The proceeds from merchandise sales go toward the AMHS Annual Scholarship Fund. We thank you for your patronage! If you have any questions regarding AMHS merchandise, please contact Lynn Sorbara, (301) 926-7792.

ITALIAN JAZZ GROUP CELEBRATES MAKE MUSIC DAY

By Nancy DeSanti

This year an enthusiastic and appreciative audience celebrated the annual Make Music Day at the Embassy of Italy with a performance by an Italian jazz group which paid tribute to Italian cinema and the soundtracks which have been so important to the films' success. The event, sponsored by the Italian Cultural Institute on June 17, 2019, featured the Rosario Giuliani Quartet, winner of the "best group" award at the European Jazz Contest.

It could well be described as "quartet takes a fresh look at unforgettable movie soundtracks."

The jazz quartet was led by Rosario Giuliani on saxophone, with Luciano Biondini on the accordion, Enzo Pietropaoli on the double bass and Michele Rabbia on drums. The group gave the unforgettable melodies a fresh look and a modernist approach. The popular movie themes were composed by Nino Rota and Ennio Morricone and they were from classics such as Cinema Paradiso, 8 e mezzo, La Dolce Vita and C'era una volta in America (In the U.S., Morricone is best known for writing the music for "The Good, the Bad and the Ugly"). So the audience knew all of



Rosario Giuliani

It could well be described as "quartet takes a fresh look at unforgettable movie soundtracks."

them. Everyone loved this group and wanted an encore, so they came back on stage and played a jazzy, extended version of the theme from The Godfather.

One of our long-time AMHS members, Romeo Sabatini, has a cousin, Edda Sabatini Dell'Orso, who sang on many of Morricone's soundtracks. You can hear Edda's singing on YouTube.

This embassy event was part of the worldwide Make Music Day which got its start in France and is celebrated in Europe each year on June 21 with free public musical performances by both professional and amateur musicians.

In Italy, it's known as the Festa Della Musica which began in 1985. But only in the last few years has it has grown to its current enormous size — more than 8,000 performances across 700 cities in 2018, with free musical events taking place in Italy's 22 airports, 9 rail stations, 46 prisons, 92 official cultural sites, and hundreds of Carrefour grocery stores, just to name a few. ■



Festa Della Musica scene in Italy

From the AMHS Nominating Committee

Submitted by Maria Ann D'Andrea
on behalf of the committee

On November 17, at the general membership meeting, the Society will hold elections for the positions of President, 1st and 2nd Vice President, Treasurer, and three members of the Board. The committee is pleased to report that the five current officers have agreed to serve another 2-year term: Ray LaVerghetta, President; Nancy DeSanti, 1st Vice President-Programs; Lynn Sorbara, 2nd Vice President-Membership; Carmine James Spellane, Secretary; and Peter Bell, Treasurer.

The three members of the Board whose term expires at the end of this year are Jeff Clark, Helen Free, and Albert Paolantonio. The committee is pleased to report that we have found two candidates who have agreed to serve on the Board: Chris Reneker and Joseph "Sonny" Scafetta Jr. The bios for these candidates will be provided in the November-December issue of the AMHS Notiziario. Board members serve for a three-year term.

The committee is looking for a third candidate to serve on the Board. If you are interested in volunteering your time to assist with the operations of Society to further its mission — and have fun in the process — please contact Maria D'Andrea-Yothers via email, uva051985@comcast.net or via telephone, (703) 473-4033. (The members of the Nominating Committee are Lucio D'Andrea, Maria D'Andrea-Yothers, and Lynn Sorbara). ■



LUNCHEON MEETING

Celebrating the Vespa And its Abruzzese Inventor

By Willy Meaux

Please join us for a wonderful program about the Vespa, that iconic symbol of Italy. Learn about Corradino D'Ascanio, the Abruzzese inventor of the Vespa from our guest speaker, AMHS member Willy Meaux. Willy will also show a short documentary on D'Ascanio's life and invention. Our program is part of a weekend *Raduno*, "the Vespa Rally of the Nation's Capital." The AMHS scholarship winners for the 2018-2019 academic year, Kathryn Donati and Francesca Minicozzi, will also be in attendance.

**SUNDAY,
Sept. 22
1:00 PM**

at Casa Italiana
595 Third Street, NW
Washington, DC

MENU

Lunch catered by Fontina Grille: house salad, Pasta Rosé (vegetarian with a light sauce), Chicken Marsala, rice, homemade focaccia, and dessert. Beverages included.

COST

\$20.00 members | **\$25.00** non-members.

We encourage you to PAY ONLINE,
using Visa or Mastercard, at
www.abruzzomoliseheritagesociety.org
(See "Upcoming Events" on the home page)

***Paid reservations must be received by
September 18.***

Contact Peter Bell, (202) 276-2483

✂ **Return with Payment**

PAID RESERVATIONS for AMHS General Society Meeting on Sunday, September 22, 2019

Please make check payable to AMHS.

Send to AMHS, c/o Peter Bell, 328 8th Street, N.E., Washington, DC 20002

Name(s): _____

Phone: _____

Guest(s): _____

Number Attending: _____ Check Amount: _____

Email: _____

LUNCHEON MEETING

Celebrating the Vespa And its Abruzzese Inventor

Presented by Willy Meaux

Sept.
22



See details on page 11

RESERVATION DEADLINE: September 18

2019 CALENDAR of EVENTS

**FRIDAY-SUNDAY,
SEPTEMBER 20-22**

Raduno Vespa Rally

Casa Italiana and other locations

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 22

General Society Meeting

1:00pm | Casa Italiana

**FRIDAY-SATURDAY,
NOVEMBER 1-2**

NIAF 44th Anniversary Gala Weekend — Region of Honor, Molise

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 17

Annual Wine Tasting

1:00pm | Casa Italiana



www.abruzzomoliseheritagesociety.org



THE ABRUZZO AND MOLISE HERITAGE SOCIETY

of the Washington, DC Area

Celebrating Italian Culture & Community since 2000

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