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# La Voce della Dante

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## From the President's Desk

December 1, 2020

Ciao a tutti e Buon Natale!

Looking forward to seeing many of you on **December 9** at our **Natale Zoom Evening**. Watch for a couple of emails in the days before then!

An online Tombola game will be the main focus, but we hope to also share recipes, stories, and your DIY Christmas beverage for a toast together! **BUT....** To date, no one has submitted recipes or stories! I don't think you want to read *all* of mine... so please folks, get spirited, and send me some items to share! We need all to help the season be merry.

I hope to have your submissions by December 5 so we can organize them into a print document for sharing. I am looking for **Deviled Egg Recipes** (*in memoriam, Terry Hanlon!*) **Holiday Favorite Recipes** and/or **Holiday dinner "fail" or other stories**. I will credit you as the source or *not*, you tell me your choice!  
[joyceramee@danteseattle.org](mailto:joyceramee@danteseattle.org) for submissions.

Other great goings-on-

**SIFF is alive, well, and virtual this year** – you've seen the general announcement, with our Dante-sponsor discount offer, (open to anyone on our list to use) and Dante members will receive detailed information about special offers soon. Which segues nicely into my next point...

**Dante Membership renewal season is coming soon** – January is our time to be sure we all stay current. While we obviously are not paying "rent" during this season of virtual offerings, the acquisition of quality programs online has its share of expenses, and we want to be sure Dante is ready to come back strong once gatherings are allowed again. **So please, don't let your membership lapse**, and if you are in a position to possibly make a donation above the renewal (\$40/individual, \$50 family) your generosity will be put to good use! Renewals and donations can be made at the web site.

Beyond these necessary announcements, Rodger and I wish you and all those you hold dear the brightest and most hopeful Holiday Season ahead. May we all try to be "light and hope" for each other.

**Merry Christmas, Buon Natale, peace and good will to all.**

Joyce

## December & January Programs

**December 9, 2020 Festa di Natale**

A Zoom Party!

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**January 13, 2021 English Meeting**

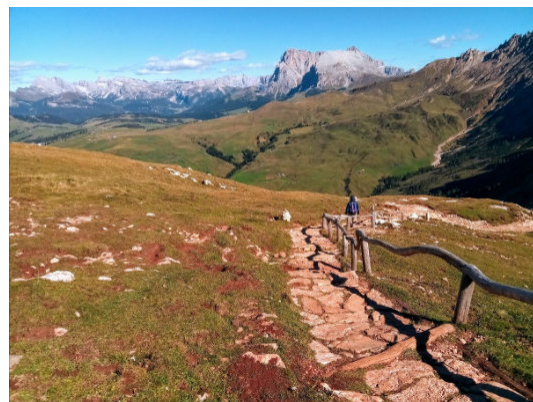


## **Walking Through History in the Veneto**

*By Janet and John Lenart*

Anywhere you walk in Italy you find history. You generate all sorts of questions about the origin of the sights. If you're lucky you also find people living in the area who are eager to answer your questions. We will share our enthusiasm for the 52 Tunnels hike, the Dolomites and the city of Vicenza. Then we'll look back on World War I and II history and recount stories from locals to explain the sights and the impact on people today.

Janet (a retired Nurse Practitioner) and John (a retired engineer) moved to Vicenza, Italy in 1994 to work as civilians on a U.S Army post. They lived in the Vicenza community for almost 19 years and then returned to Seattle. They spend every Fall in Vicenza, except when there is a worldwide pandemic.



*Photos: The 52 Tunnels Trail, Piazza dei Signori, Vicenza, The Dolomites*

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**January 27, 2021 Italian Meeting**



**From the Apennines to the Cascades  
Pursuing Scientific Excellence**

Dr. Lorenzo Giacani

*My talk will focus on the path that brought me to the US from Italy, and the work that I currently do at the University of Washington on one of the oldest known sexually-transmitted infections, syphilis.*

Dr. Lorenzo Giacani earned a BS in Molecular Biology magna cum laude at the University of Bologna (Italy) in 1998. His interest in STIs and syphilis began after being drafted into the Italian Army, where he was tasked with testing soldiers for syphilis. Following his service, Dr. Giacani enrolled in a Ph.D. program in Medical Biotechnology also at the University of Bologna, graduating in 2005. As a graduate student, Dr. Giacani focused primarily on the study of



the virulence factors of the syphilis agent. In 2002, he accepted a position as an exchange scholar and moved to the University of Washington, where he is currently an Associate Professor in the Departments of Medicine and Global Health, where he keeps studying syphilis pathogenesis and evaluating vaccine candidates for syphilis. Throughout his career, he has received the ASTDA Developmental Award and the Vallesina Award for his scientific achievements.

A medical illustration attributed to Albrecht Dürer (1496) depicting a person with syphilis.

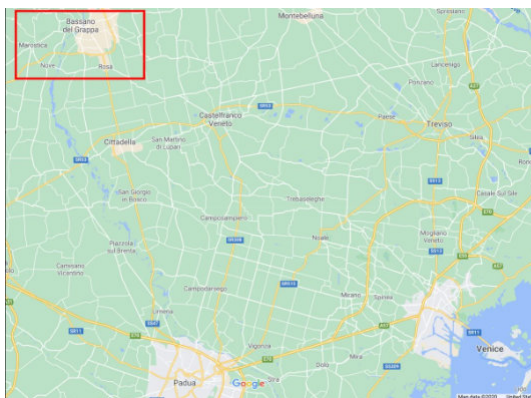


The following story, **Bassano del Grappa**, is one of a series of stories by members telling about a town or place that has special meaning to that member. It may be a place often visited or where family is from or still lives. The idea is not to write a travel log but to share with us some history, the town's location, interesting sites, characteristics of the town, what makes it unique or beautiful, etc.

Do you have a special place to share with us? Please send your story with 4-6 photos (or questions) to Andrea Aldrich, [aaldrichj@gmail.com](mailto:aaldrichj@gmail.com). Grazie!

## Bassano del Grappa, Italy

By Janet Lenart



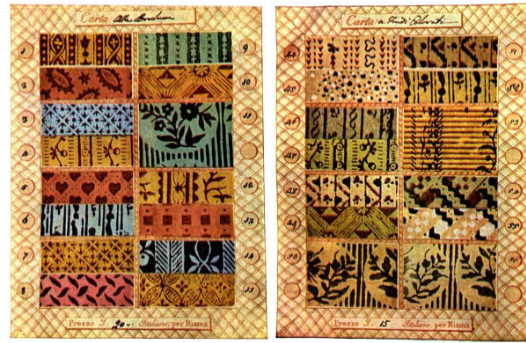
**W**hile living in Vicenza, Italy I found a reflection of the Pacific Northwest in the nearby town of Bassano del Grappa. When I yearned for the woods and a white water river I would find these plus centuries of Italian history, traditions of local food and drink and exciting outdoor activities in the area of Bassano del Grappa.

Bassano del Grappa is found in the Veneto region of Italy. It is about an hour's drive north of Padova or northwest of Venice. The population is about 43,000. It is at the base of 5,800 foot Mt. Grappa and is bisected by the Brenta river which flows into the Adriatic Sea near Venice.

The Ponte degli Alpini (also known as Ponte Vecchio) is among the most important features of Bassano del Grappa. The bridge was designed by Andrea Palladio in 1569. During numerous wars the bridge has been damaged and rebuilt.

The bridge is named for the mountain infantry called the Alpini. The infantry was founded in 1872 to protect the mountainous borders of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. Recruiting from mountain valleys and towns such as Bassano meant a ready supply of men with mountain expertise. In Bassano, on the lower floors of a taverna is the museum of the Ponte degli Alpini. Pictures, objects, maps and dioramas tell the poignant story of World War I in the Bassano area.

The Hemingway Museum is located in the Villa Ca' Erizzo Luca, a 15th century villa in Bassano del Grappa. During World War I, the American Red Cross volunteer ambulances drivers were housed in the villa. Hemingway describes this villa where he stayed in his 1919 writings *The Woppian Way* and *The Passing of Pickles McCarty*.



The Remondini Museum explains paper-making and decorative printing traditions that go back to the 17th century in Bassano. Beautiful decorative and marbled paper prints are displayed and numerous stationary items are for sale.

Food that is typical of the area includes porcini mushrooms, cheeses and “la pinza” a semi-sweet bread/cake.

Grappa is an alcohol drink (70 to 120 proof) that originated when poor vineyard workers distilled the remains of grape skins, seeds and vines that were left after wine was made. It is now a common “digestivo” or after-dinner drink and can be added to an espresso in the morning, called “caffè corretto”. The Poli Museo del Grappa in Bassano can be toured to understand the history and production process and taste various types of grappa.

Another traditional alcohol drink of the area is Parampampoli, which is heated to create a dramatic effect and drunk in small cups after dinner, especially during cold winter evenings.

In Bassano and Nove, a nearby small town, the ceramics tradition goes back to the 16th century and remains an important part of the economy. Their work is internationally known and they receive orders from luxury home decoration stores from around the world. In Nove there is a ceramics museum.



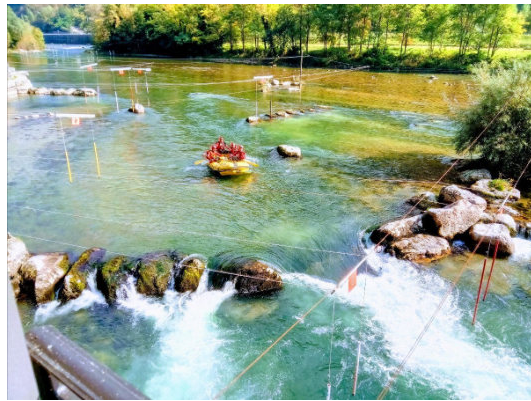


Val Brenta is the picturesque valley which the Brenta River dissects as it descends from the mountains through Bassano del Grappa.

It was a center for tobacco cultivation from about 1560 to 1960. The Republic of Venice instituted a tariff on tobacco imports and prohibited private cultivation and sales. People of the Val Brenta continued to replace their traditional crops of hemp, mulberries, corn and other grains with tobacco which they sold on the black market.

Under the subsequent Austrian rule (1797 to 1805) the laws changed to allow private cultivation but high taxes were levied, thus the black market continued. This history is on view at the Museo del Tabacco and along the trails marked Alta Via del Tabacco.





Small villages are found along the Brenta River where outdoor activities thrive today. Valstagna is home to rafting and kayaking opportunities.

Bicycling for all levels of stamina is popular. The Anello del Grappa is a 135 kilometer bicycle route and involves more than 4000 feet of elevation gain as it circles Monte Grappa. Overlooking the Val Brenta is Monte Grappa which is famous for its paragliding and hang gliding conditions and terrain. Hiking possibilities abound which traverse spectacular natural sites and historical features. The realities of history are palpable when walking past war monuments in small towns. If you pause to read the names the tragic loss of fathers and their sons in World War I and later in World War II is evident.

Monte Grappa overlooks Bassano del Grappa. It is known for outdoor activities and for the massive World War I Memorial with the remains of more than 12,000 Italian and Austrian-Hungarian soldiers.

Marostica is a nearby town of 14,000 people which consists of a hill crowned with a castle and surrounded by a wall. These were built soon after the year 1000 and can be visited by walking through this small town and climbing the hill. Every two years about 500 people from the town and surrounding area recreate a live chess match and medieval festival in the town square.

To summarize, in a small area of the Veneto Region of Italy, near Bassano del Grappa there are endless opportunities to learn about centuries of history, to experience spectacular outdoor opportunities and appreciate the food and drink traditions.



Photos for **Bassano del Grappa**, left to right, top to bottom

Map—Bassano  
 Marostica Wall  
 Ponte degli Alpini by Palladio  
 Museo del Ponte degli Alpini  
 Hemingway Museum, Bassano  
 Remondini carta parati  
 Parampamopoli  
 Val Brenta

Ceramics, Modern  
 Ceramics, Traditional  
 Grappa  
 Trail Alta Via Del Tabacco  
 Farmers in Tobacco Field  
 Rafting  
 War Monument  
 Bicycle Route  
 Monte Grappa WWI Memorial



**DA**  
SOCIETA DANTE ALIGHIERI  
IL MONDO IN ITALIANO

**LEARN  
ITALIAN  
at home**

4 LEVELS  
FROM A1  
TO B2

TUESDAYS &  
THURSDAYS  
7:00-8:30 P.M.  
10 WEEKS

Online classes begin  
January 7th, 2021

- Conversational skills.
- Basic to intermediate grammar.
- Pronunciation.
- Cultural information.
- Gain skills for the PLIDA Certification Exam.
- All levels taught by native speakers.

Students will interact with their instructor and peers through the video conferencing platform Zoom. The Zoom platform allows real time interactions between the students and the instructor. Instructors will present in real time the grammatical structures and vocabulary listed in the syllabus with the support of Zoom Whiteboard among other tools. Just as for in-person classes, students will be able to ask questions and interact with each other. Follow up exercises will be provided – some during the online connection and others to be completed offline. During each lesson, instructors will provide opportunities for conversation as a class and in groups with the aid of images, guided interviews and more.

Call us: (206) 289-0419  
Email: [school@danteseattle.org](mailto:school@danteseattle.org)  
Website: [www.danteseattle.org](http://www.danteseattle.org)

**REGISTER  
ONLINE BY  
12/26**

## Italian Language Program News

By Giuseppe Tassone

Italian Language Program Director

**T**he Italian Language Program of the Dante Alighieri Society resumes, after the winter break on January 7<sup>th</sup> 2021. As for the previous quarters, classes are held online. Winter quarter is the continuation of fall quarter. In our program, all levels runs over 3 quarters (from fall to spring). Therefore if a student is an absolute beginner, we recommend waiting until next fall to begin and/or contact the Language Program Director for guidance. Continuing students should register for the same level as in Fall Quarter, since it is the continuation of the previous quarter. If there are enough registrations for any level, additional sections will be added. New students with some knowledge of Italian should contact the Language Program Director for a placement in one of



our ongoing levels.

Last day of class for fall quarter is December 10<sup>th</sup>. On the same night *SIFF - Cinema Italian Style*, co-sponsored by us will begin virtually. Traditionally when the Festival was in November at Uptown Theater, as Italian Language Program, we used to watch at least one film as a class. The instructor accompanied the students to watch a film with follow up discussions and class activities on the particular film. This year since it is during our break, we will not be able to do it. However we encourage our students and instructors to watch at least one film and report something about it when the quarter resumes in January.

To conclude I want to wish to our students a successful completion of their first quarter and thank our instructors Laura Ciroi, Nicla Rivero, Francesca Giambartolomei, Damiano Pinton, Paola Alberti and Roberta Punzi for their excellent work and commitment to our program.

In Bocca al Lupo e Buone Feste.

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## What's happening: SIFF



**Dante Alighieri** is a proud sponsor of **Cinema Italian Style at SIFF**, bringing the best in new Italian cinema right to your home in 2020—with a virtual 12th edition! Featuring work from established masters and new voices, pre-recorded filmmaker Q&As, and films spanning the country, Cinema Italian Style will hit your screens December 10 - 17, 2020.

Save \$10 on full priced passes with promo code **DA2020PASS**  
and \$2 on regular priced tickets with promo code **DA2020TIX**. \* Passes on sale now!  
Full lineup and tickets will be released December 3.

**Buy Pass:** <https://www.siff.net/year-round-cinema/film-festivals/cinema-italian-style>

*\*Discounts available on full priced passes and tickets and not applicable on SIFF Member discounted passes/tickets.*

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## An Italian Christmas Tradition

by Domenico Minotti

**M**y Italian born father Pasquale came to live with us when he was 73 and spent the last 13 years of his life with us. My wife was from a Scandinavian background and was a wonderful cook.

On the first Christmas that he was with us, my wife decided she would cook something special for Christmas eve and made a recipe for “frikadeller”, Danish meatballs made with pork and veal.

My father took one look and said, “ Ma no, non è possibile. La vigilia di Natale, non si mangia carne!”  
Mortified, my wife quickly made him some plain pasta (we ate the meatballs!)

I had not remembered the tradition of the seven fishes on Christmas Eve but after this event I decided to check it out. Eating fish on Christmas Eve dates from the Roman Catholic custom of abstinence from eating meat and dairy products on the eves of certain feast days. The number seven is connected to multiple Catholic symbols: the seven sacraments, the seven days of creation, and the seven deadly sins.

The feast of the seven fishes emerged in the late 1800’s among Southern Italian immigrants in Little Italy, NYC. The meal made them feel close to their homes and celebrated the sea. Today it’s considered one of the oldest Italian traditions, and we observe it these days with a hearty cioppino containing seven varieties of seafood and fish.

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**Buone Feste a Tutti!**

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The Dante Alighieri Society of Washington is a nonprofit corporation organized to promote Italian language and culture within the state of Washington. Membership is open to anyone interested in the goals and ideals of our society regardless of ethnic origin. La Voce della Dante is published eight times a year by the Dante Alighieri Society of Washington. All rights reserved.

Dante Alighieri Society of Washington  
*Società per la diffusione della lingua e della cultura italiana nel mondo*

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