



Portland Italian Businessmen's Club Newsletter

August 2009

L ' Angolo della Cultura

Mammoni (mamma's boys) and Mammismo (overzealous maternal attention to adult male children) are Italian terms of a real phenomenon that has grown over recent decades in Italy. Today, four out of five Italian men between 18 and 30 live at home with their parents, as compared to one out of four in the USA. Usual reasons for this include Italy's high unemployment rate, strong family ties, etc. But many single males well into their 40's and beyond choose to keep their childhood room as a part-time retreat or even live there. Even sons who are gainfully employed with their own elegant apartments bring laundry to mamma, have her cook meals or help out financially by buying clothes, refilling their refrigerator, etc., even if money is not a problem.

Studies have tried to explain why this is happening, most stating that it is more the Italian mothers who are promoting this lifestyle by not letting go, rather than sons looking for help. Why? To 'bribe' their children and keep them around; in effect 'buying love'.

Instead of high unemployment being a cause, many believe the opposite, men are in no hurry to get on with life, adding to Italy's high unemployment rate. It is also given as one reason for the rise in Italy's divorce rate by encouraging unhappy husbands to flee home to mamma when the stress of a marriage gets too much.

In an Italian best seller that is both humorous and factual, if not a totally serious work, Fabrizio Blini's Mamma Mia examines not only *mamma's* role in the family, but also the detrimental effect of *mammismo* on Italy's economy and cultural life. He does this based upon his own experience as a mammoni. He recognized that, much as Marx said about religion, "mothers are the opiate of children".

August Meeting Notice

Our next general dinner meeting will be on August 11 at 6:00 at Caro Amico on Barbur Blvd in Portland. Our speaker will be Andrea Spella of Spella Caffè, (featured on the next page) who will talk about coffee; espresso in particular and its Italian heritage.

The July 14 meeting was well attended and lively with short talks by Shireen Farahi, who signed up many volunteers for this year's Festa Italiana, and Italian born sculptor, Armando Barbon who distributed brochures on his art and spoke about his work and plans.

In a frank discussion, opening the membership to women was raised, and received a positive response. The board was asked to look into various options and their impact. This topic will continue to be discussed in board and general meetings before being brought up for a vote. If it goes forward in some version, Joe Trippi volunteered to amend the bylaws. We would really like your input, so please attend our meetings.

Members are always invited to attend IBC's board meetings, held on the 4th Tuesday of the month at Ron Milio's Port City Pasta in LO. The next meeting will be on July 28 at 6:30.

Bocce: What a Team!!!

Winning back-to-back matches on July 13 and 20, IBC has shot up in the league standings. Jim Zuffrea's skillful rolls in clutch plays made the difference in several games. In the last match, maybe it was the meatballs that Patrick Siriani brought that fired the team up.



Se non è véro, è ben trovato

Business Focus on Spella Caffè

Where can the best cup of espresso be found in Portland? According to a New York Times travel article on Portland this past April, it is found at IBC member Andrea Spella's, *Spella Caffè* at the corner of SW 9th and Alder in downtown Portland. If you've wondered why you can't get an espresso like those in Italy...even in coffee rich Portland, try Spella's Caffè. Andrea buys directly from growers, does his own roasting in the Italian style and, based on the popularity of his café, clearly knows his business.



Andrea grew up in an Italian-American household (Sicily and Campania through Chicago) which had food as its business and passion. Over the past nine years, he has traveled to coffee plantations and spent years learning the business with larger coffee houses before starting out on his own in this spot. What is amazing is that from this small van (pictured), he has garnered many great write-ups and hundreds of true coffee fans.

Currently housed in a corner location in the busy lunch cart block, Andrea has plans to move indoors.

He is looking at a nearby downtown spot and funding the venture with the help of share investors. The next time that you are downtown, try his espresso or an "affogato" (a cup of gelato with a shot of espresso on top) and talk with Andrea about his coffee techniques or his plans for the indoor café. He will be our speaker at the August 11th dinner meeting.

We will try to have a member's business focus in each newsletter. If you wish to include your business in a column or wish to see a topic in the newsletter...or write about one, please contact me.

Portland 's 2009 **Festa Italiana** at *"Piazza Italia"* *Pioneer Courthouse Square*

A copy of the Festa brochure is enclosed with this newsletter. For additional copies to distribute through your business, please contact me: Bob Iannacone at robert202@comcast.net – 971-255-0420. As a part of Portland's Italian-American community, this is our Festa, so please attend and promote it. Entertainment for this year's Festa will include our own IBC member, **John English**, on Thursday at 5:00.

Our IBC club table in the upper level for this year will be limited to Friday and Saturday. A big change is that instead of selling items as we have in the past, we will use the table to promote our businesses as well as membership in the IBC. Members can distribute brochures, business cards and other information. Please contact any member of the IBC board for more information.

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L 'Aquila Earthquake Relief Fund Update

← A matching grant for up to \$500 for new contributions was approved, which is to come from our general fund. With that grant, we are close to \$1500 and a target of \$2000 to help families in the L'Aquila area is a realistic goal., so send any amount to help. Make check out to IBC account #7579631412.