



Portland Italian Businessmen's Club Newsletter

September 2009

Angolo della Cultura

While in Rome or Florence, you've probably seen the beautiful chalk art reproductions of famous paintings drawn on the pavement in many tourist areas. However, you probably didn't know that their history dates to 16th century Italy. The artists are called Madonnari, because the religious themes they drew frequently included the Madonna.

In past centuries, these artists traveled between cities in Italy, trying to match their travel with local religious days. They drew their pictures by churches or in piazzas with charcoal, broken clay tiles and other crude chalk in return for food and sometimes a small coin. The practice continued for centuries until WWII all but ended it.

In 1972, the art form was given new life when the Lombardian town of Grazie di Curtatone held a competition to recognize and publicize it. That city still holds a prestigious yearly festival, bringing artists from around the world who then take it to their home countries. Today, there are no rules about what to draw and some are quite amazing, but in Italy most artists still copy the Renaissance masterpieces.

Perhaps you were at Portland's Festa Italiana last year and saw the beautiful chalk drawing produced by a Madonnari from Rome. However, she needn't have come all that way. America has several "street painting" festivals, including this year's 'Chalk Art Festival' on September 19 at nearby Forest Grove. Perhaps the best known Chalk art festivals are in California at Santa Barbara and San Rafael. An exceptional "street painting" was produced on a street in front of Mission San Rafael; a beautiful copy of the entire Sistine Chapel ceiling.

IBC at Portland's Festa Italiana

Portland's 18th annual Festa Italiana brought a little bit of Italy....well, maybe Italian-American memories of it, to Pioneer Courthouse Square. Mostly good weather, good food, lively entertainment and very good Italian wines at reasonable prices all contributed to happy crowds. Many IBC members and families were there to enjoy at least a part of the three-days of festivities. As well as enjoying it, many IBC members volunteered for the Festa, and at our IBC table, all wearing our distinctive black logo shirts.



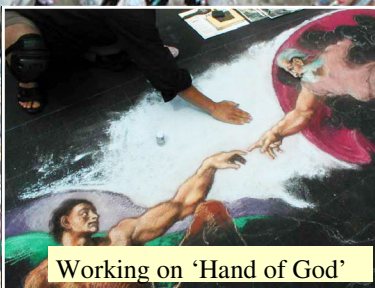
IBC President Frank Genovese below our banner at the IBC table

Frank Genovese, Jim Zuffrea, Guy LaCesa, John Tirabasso and Roger Cherry put in a lot of time at the IBC table, which was different this year. We sold items that were purchased in previous years, so the sales were pure income (thanks to Jim's salesmanship!). We attracted interest in our club through a large banner

and IBC history chart, getting at least a couple of new members and lots of interest from the effort. Another significant difference was that several of us promoted our businesses by having brochures and business cards to publicize what we do.

Auguri Shari!

We send best wishes and prayers to Shari Santilli, wife of our long time board and club member, A.J. Shari is recovering from several strokes.



Working on 'Hand of God'



"Sistine Chapel ceiling" at Italian Street Painting Festival, San Rafael, CA in 2003

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Business Focus on John English “The Voice”

At our Christmas dinner last December, IBC member, John English “*The Voice*”, performed for our entertainment and dancing. We don’t see John at our Tuesday meetings because he regularly performs on Tuesday evenings. However, he is a valued IBC member who will again be our entertainment at the Christmas dinner party on December 8 at the Crock Pot, an event being planned by Roger Cherry. Please ask your wife or “significant other” to set aside that date now; details will be provided over the next few months. John appeared at last week’s Festa Italiana and you can catch him at one of his regular performances around the area.



John’s show ‘*A Tribute to Frank Sinatra*’ has taken this classy (you will rarely see him without a tux) singer to many places on the west coast and Nevada, but most frequently he performs in the Portland area. Sometimes alone and sometimes with the 8-piece Jack Quinby Orchestra, he has become a favorite at weddings, anniversaries, fund raisers and performs regularly at small venues around the area. His repertoire includes many of Sinatra’s hits, as well as the standards of Dean Martin and Sammy.

John, his lovely wife Mary and their son, Barry, live in Aloha and can be reached at 503-259-2354. And yes, John’s last name is English, but the best part of him is Italian.

Michael Mignano Honored

Mike Mignano was honored for dedicated volunteer work for Little Children of the World. In his honor, the organization was awarded a grant of \$2500 by the MDRT Foundation to provide supplies and services for helping children and their families living in poverty in the southern region of the Philippines. For several years, Mike has made a trip to that region to provide assistance and deliver much-needed school supplies, sanitation items, clothing and food. Congratulations to Mike on being recognized for doing good work to help others.

The L’Aquila Earthquake Relief Fund

Speaking of helping others, we have received several additional contributions to our fund. Also, at the July board meeting, 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. Helping Italy to recover from major tragedies, as well our local giving, is a big part of what the IBC was founded for. Please help if you haven’t yet by sending a check to the IBC: account #7579631412.

Bocce

It is necessary to report with deep regrets that our team was eliminated from Club Paesano’s tournament last month ...but, just barely. The game ended on a really exciting last roll by Keith Armstead. With the game tied at 10-10, Keith’s final toss looked perfect, slightly nicking the pallino, but it edged off to the right, just a few inches too far. The real story is how much our team improved over the weeks of the tournament and how ready we will be for the next tournament or bocce get-together.

September Meeting Notice

Our next general meeting will be on Tuesday, September 8 at 6:00 at Caro Amico on 3603 SW Barbur Blvd in Portland. At our last meeting there, we had a great dinner of salad, pizza, three kinds of pasta, meatballs and sausage along with an interesting talk by Andrea Spella about coffee, espresso and his Spella Caffè. Our speaker will be Jo Ann Gallo, president of the local UNICO chapter, the newest Italian-American group in Portland, and also the largest Italian-American service organization in the country. Jo Ann will discuss what UNICO is and the synergism that can come from local groups, such as our two organization, working more closely. Good food, stories and fellowship, good reasons to be there in September.

Members are invited to attend all board meetings; the next one is on Tues, Sept 22, 6:30 at Port City Pasta, LO