

BOLETIN BOGIANEN IN ACTION

Andrew M. Canepa, *Editor*

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President's Message

The past year 2021 was certainly a challenging one for our Association. Planned events had to be postponed due to the Covid virus. However, we finally managed to host a very successful Bagna Cauda Dinner at the Galileo Club of Richmond on Sunday, June 26. This event was free for our members and was enjoyed by all, so much so that numerous requests have been made to reprise this function in the coming winter.

Additionally, we will host a Scampagnata, the traditional Italian summer countryside outing, on Saturday, September 10, at the Viano Winery of Martinez. It will start with appetizers at 1:00 PM, followed by luncheon and dessert, all accompanied by the music of accordianist George Campi. Save the date! You'll receive an invitation in the mail.

Would you like to volunteer for our Association? We need assistance in holding our events, and we also need additional Board members. The Board meets about six times a year to plan activities and provide direction for the club. If you would like to offer your services, please call me at (925) 682-8943 or send me an email at jadnot@yahoo.com.

I look forward to meeting and greeting you at our upcoming social events.—*Joseph Tonda*

Pinot e La Polenta

Back in the day, when the Piedmontese Study Group was run by Gerald L. Fabian—aka Gegin ed Borgial—one of our more entertaining endeavors was translating the following joke from Italian into our own tribal language. Here it goes, recycled from the Summer 1998 *Boletín*:

Pinòt e la polenta, ò a venta preparase ben për di le busie. Ogni giorn che Pinòt andava a scòla, ij sò amis a-j ciamavo còsa ch'è l'avia mangià për sen-a. E Pinòt a disìa sempe la stessa còsa: "Polenta!" E j'amis a-j tiravo 'l cul. Anlora, Pinòt ha lamentase a sò mare, e chila a l'ha ditje 'd responde che jer sèira a l'avia mangià agnòlòt. El giorn dòp, quand che j'amis a l'ha ciamajè còsa ch'è l'avia mangià la sèira prima, Pinòt subit a l'ha respondù, "Agnòlòt!" E lor, tant ampressionà, a l'han ciamajè, "Ma quant t'hasoe mangià?" E Pinòt, tut sorident e con tant orgheuj, a l'ha crià fort... "Tre fette!"

Eataly Silicon Valley

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the much-ballyhooed opening of the first Eataly on the Pacific Coast, set for 2021 and announced in our Summer 2020 *Boletín*, was delayed. Finally, in June, the doors were swung open to this 51,000-square-foot, three-story emporium exclusively dedicated to Italian food and drink in the Westfield Valley Fair Mall of San Jose. The first Eataly was opened in Turin in 2007, the brainchild of Oscar Farinetti of Alba, and the chain has since grown to over forty venues worldwide. Given its origins, it's no surprise that, among the 1,200 Italian wines offered on the second floor of this newest iteration, the wines of Piemonte are front and center.

Stanley Tucci on Piemonte

In May of this year, at the very end of the one-hour segment on Piemonte in his CNN series *Searching for Italy*, our culinary/historical guide, who had devoted time to both Cavour gourmand and to his role in the unification of Italy, defined Piemonte as "a region without which I wouldn't be searching for Italy at all." A very fitting tribute.

Friedrich Nietzsche on Torino

Before collapsing into a permanent syphilitic dementia, the German philosopher lived in Turin from April 1888 to January 1889, more specifically in a fourth-floor room at No. 6 Via Carlo Alberto. He wrote four books there, and he also did a lot of walking. He took a great liking to the place. To his friend Peter Gast, Nietzsche wrote the following: "What a dignified and serious city! Not at all a metropolis, not at all modern, as I had feared, but a princely residence of the 17th century. ...Everywhere the aristocratic calm has been kept: there are no petty suburbs; a unity of taste even in matters of color (the whole city is yellow or reddish-brown). And a classical place for the feet as for the eyes! What robustness, what sidewalks, not to mention the buses and trams, the organization of which verges on the marvelous here. ...Incredible—what serious and solemn palaces! And the style of the palaces, without any pretentiousness; the streets clean and serious—and everything far more dignified than I had expected! The most beautiful cafes I have ever seen. ...The evening on the Po Bridge—glorious! Beyond good and evil!" Wow! What a testimonial!

Don Bosco, The Ultimate Social Saint

Right up front, by way of clarification, Don is not the saint's first name. In Italian, the title "don" in front of a last name refers to a secular priest, that is, a diocesan or parish priest, not belonging to any particular religious order. On the other hand, the same title in front of a first name implies that respect is due to the bearer. This title was once in use throughout Italy and the Spanish realms. Remember Don Diego in Disney's old *Zorro* TV series? With this in mind, Don Corleone of *The Godfather* is totally wrong. It should be Don Vito. But I digress.

Giovanni Bosco was born in 1815 into a peasant family in Castelnuovo in the province of Asti, the same town that gave birth to Saint Giuseppe Cafasso, The Gallows Priest, who was Don Bosco's close friend and spiritual guide. Giovanni was ordained in 1841, and he started his apostolate in the rough-and-tumble Valdocco neighborhood of Torino in 1846.



There, Don Bosco ministered to at-risk youths and the occasional juvenile delinquent. After the Napoleonic Wars, Piemonte and Torino were in a state of flux. Between 1811 and 1845, the city had grown exponentially, from 67,000 to 121,000 inhabitants, with peasants migrating to find jobs in such industries as textiles and manufacturing, so that by 1850 more than a third of urban residents had migrated from other parts of the region. This meant that their children, especially young boys, who otherwise would have been working on farms, were floating about idly, easy prey to all kinds of negative outcomes.

To remediate this situation, Don Bosco developed and perfected two institutions: the boys club and the trade school. Called an *oratorio* (partially a misnomer), the "club" oversaw organized activities, including sports. The trade school emphasized instruction in modern, urban, and eminently practical *arti e mestieri*, such as tailoring, printing, cabinetry, and metal working. And, of course, the boys' spiritual needs were addressed as well.

In 1859, Don Bosco founded the Salesian Order, named for Saint Francis de Sales, a 17th-century Savoyard bishop of Geneva and the patron saint of Piemonte. In spite of the Kingdom of Sardinia's anticlerical bent, the new order was certified because of its socially redeeming value.

It eventually expanded to include missionary activities and the care of Italian immigrants abroad.

In that classic of travel literature, *In Patagonia* (1977) by Bruce Chatwin, the author bumps into Salesians up and down the length of the Argentinian region. (Indeed, Argentina has devoted two commemorative stamps honoring the work of Salesians in the country.) A few years later, the private detective Pepe Carvalho, protagonist of the crime novel *Los pájaros de Bangkok* (1983) by Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, encounters Salesians in the jungles of Thailand. They can also be found today in San Francisco's North Beach. In fact, in 2020, the Salesian Order boasted around 15,000 members, active in ninety-four geographical provinces, with 1,808 houses, and in charge of 134 parishes. It is the second largest Catholic religious order after the Jesuits.

Pop Quiz: Who is the most famous living Salesian? Hint: or ex-Salesian? The answer will be found in the next *Boletín*, unless he dies in the interim.