

PIEMONTESI NEL MONDO OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

BOLETIN BOGIANEN IN ACTION

Andrew M. Canepa, *Editor*

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President's Message

Last year we had three successful activities on both sides of the Bay: a Bagna Cauda Dinner in Richmond, the Scampagnata in Martinez, and a Piemontese Dinner in Burlingame. Our next function will be another Bagna Cauda Dinner at last year's venue, the Galileo Club of Richmond, on April 30. The flyers are being mailed, and paid members will receive a \$15 subsidy from our organization.

Please note that annual membership dues have been reduced to \$20 per person. If you haven't yet paid, send in your dues.

Our Piedmontese Study Group, or Cit Sircol, meets every second Thursday of the month by Zoom from 1:30 to 3:30 PM. Stories in *piemontèis* are emailed to classmates ahead of time. The attendees then read and discuss those texts. If you're interested in participating, please contact the Class Instructor Kevin McCabe at contacc@att.net or myself at adnot@yahoo.com for additional information.

I hope you will join us for Bagna Cauda on April 30th — *Joseph Tonda*

Torino, Capitale Italiana del Cioccolato

La storia dell'amore fra Torino e il cioccolato è cosa antica, fin da quando nel lontano 1560 Emanuele Filiberto di Savoia servì ai Torinesi una fumante tazza di cioccolata calda per festeggiare il trasferimento della sede ducale da Chambéry alle rive del Po.

È soprattutto per questo amore secolare che Torino è stata dichiarata "La Capitale del Cioccolato". Infatti, sin dal 2003, si celebra la sagra **CioccolaTÒ**. Si tratta di una kermesse del cioccolato artigianale che si svolge ogni ottobre nella capitale piemontese per una durata di 10 giorni. Lì si ritrovano i maestri del cioccolato, i produttori di tutta Italia, e gli chefs stellati, ospitati nei vari stands per l'intera piazza San Carlo e per tutta via Roma. Ci sono spazi espositivi con riproduzioni della elaborazione del cioccolato, dove le lavorazioni vengono eseguite in diretta per l'intera giornata. Ci sono altresì i famosi *turet*, a forma di bocca di toro, fatti di cioccolato, da cui sgorgano cascate di cioccolata liquida.

Nell'ultima domenica della fiera c'è la caccia al tesoro del gianduiotto. Torino e il gianduiotto vanno a braccetto. Gianduja, la famosa maschera torinese, e per estensione piemontese, deriva dalla locuzione *Gioann dla Doja*, ossia Giovanni del Boccale. Sarà proprio questa maschera, in occasione del carnevale del 1867, a distribuire al pubblico per la prima volta questi nuovi e golosi cioccolatini, dando ad essi il proprio nome.

Il retroscena di questo tipico prodotto piemontese risale all'epoca napoleonica, quando l'Imperatore impose il cosiddetto Blocco Continentale, causando un notevole rincaro dei prezzi del cacao e dello zucchero. Vista la situazione, il valdese Michele Prochet escogitò una geniale soluzione: allungare il scarseggiante cacao con una crema delle nocciole che abbondavano sulle colline piemontesi.

Un'altro pioniere del cioccolato, pure lui valdese, Pierre-Paul Caffarel, forma l'omonima ditta di Luserna San Giovanni nel 1826. Gli seguirono i rinomati cioccolatieri Leone (1857), Baratti & Milano (1858), Pernigotti (1868), Novi (1903), Peyrano (1915), e Streglio (1924). Non dimentichiamo poi la casa dolciaria Ferrero di Alba, conosciutissima in tutto il mondo, fondata nel 1942 e ancora a gestione familiare.

Fra i nuovi "maghi" della produzione artigianale torinese spiccano Guido Gobino, Guido Castagna, e Ziccat.

Tradizione e innovazione hanno fatto di Torino e dintorni il maggior centro italiano per la lavorazione del cioccolato con una produzione di oltre 80.000 tonnellate, per il 40% del totale nazionale, facendo della città la incontestata Capitale Italiana del Cioccolato. *Maria De Venezia*

A Cool New Website

Remember *gens.labo.net*? There you can click on a surname and a map of Italy will pop up, showing the diffusion and concentration of that last name on the peninsula and islands. Well, not always. Sometimes, through the vagaries of immigration, surnames have been changed, or maybe everybody with that last name simply left the old country. If you click on the names of two California politicians, Tom Ammiano and Eric Garcetti, you'll come up with a big "Cognome non trovato" across the map of Italy.

There's now another website, *cognomix.it*, which does the same thing, only better, and in addition allows you to find the most common surnames by province. Click on "Cognomi regionali" at the top of the home page. You'll see a list of regions. Click on Piemonte and then on the province of your choice. For example, the most common *cognomi* in the province of Asti are Musso, Cerrato, Viarengo, Fassio, and Raviola. What happened to Maggiora?

Lidia Poët: Attorney, Suffragist, Rights Advocate

Lidia Poët (1855-1949), the first woman attorney in Italy, was born into a well-to-do Waldensian family of Perrero in the Valle Germanasca, province of Torino. Educated at a girls' finishing school in Switzerland and the *liceo* of Mondovì, Lidia received a teaching credential with a certification to teach English, German and French. She matriculated at the University of Turin in 1878 and in 1881 graduated in jurisprudence with a thesis on the condition of women in Italy and their right to vote. So, Lidia Poët, obviously brilliant, was already a committed social advocate.

After a couple of years of apprenticeship, in 1883 she was admitted to the Turin bar (the Ordine degli Avvocati) as the first female lawyer in the country. That's when her troubles began. There was widespread opposition in the male-dominated profession. A lower court revoked her law license in 1884. Lidia appealed to the Corte di Cassazione, the supreme tribunal, which upheld the ruling. The arguments adduced by the court were spurious. They ranged from the legalistic cavil that the relevant statutes only referred to *avvocato* in the masculine gender to barefaced, overt, unapologetic sexism—that women were inherently unfit to exercise the legal profession, because they lacked the requisite character traits (rigor, firmness, steadfastness, etc.). Undaunted, Lidia chose to serve as a paralegal in the Pinerolo law offices of her brother. Finally, some thirty-five years later, in 1919, a new Italian law, the Legge Sacchi, allowed women to become lawyers, and Lidia's license was reinstated.

In the *meantime*, Lidia Poët had become active in the suffragist movement and the general fight for women's equality. She was also a vocal advocate for prison reform, the legalization of divorce, and the rights of minors, including the strict regulation of child labor.

Lidia never married, perhaps because it would have been difficult to find an equal. She died at age 94 in Diano Marina on the Italian Riviera.

In a long-in-coming ironic coda to the travails of Lidia Poët, Margherita Cassano (*this time a fioretina, not a piemontesina*) was nominated, on February 15, 2023, to the presidency of the Corte di Cassazione, the first woman to hold that august position.

Dateline San Francisco, 1963

That year, a 105-page booklet selling for one dollar reproduced the menus of fifty San Francisco, Peninsula, Monterey and Carmel restaurants. It led off with Adolph's in North Beach. (Understand that this publication was strictly pay-to-play and that, therefore, such storied eateries as, for example, Ernie's and the Blue Fox, were not included. They didn't need the publicity.)

Adolph's, at 641 Vallejo Street, dubbed itself "The House of Capellini Flambé" (Good God!). The first item on the published menu was "saltimbocca alla piemontese," what my mother called *rulade* and what is also known as *vitello alla valdostana*. The very last item listed is "sliced center of filet a la Piemontese with white truffles from Alba" at \$4.50.

The owner, Adolph Motta, used to be a partner and front man for a French restaurant called Paris Louvre. We don't know much about him, except that he was obsessed with finding a less expensive California source for truffles. He complained in 1958 that the cost of a white truffle had risen to \$35 a pound. (Nowadays, it's well over \$2,500 a pound.) To this end, he kept on bringing over *can da trifole* from Alba. One of them, by the name of Bobby, tried to root out the tubers in the foothills of the Sierras...to no avail. Until the Périgord type of black truffle was finally seeded in the 2000s, Adolph Motta, like our erstwhile board member Henry Trione, was chasing an elusive El Dorado.