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# VILLAROSSA VOICE

THE NEWSLETTER for SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY IN FLORENCE

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## SUF Volunteers: Hands, Heart and Soul

Brenda Cooke, Staff

Fall 2004: Seven SUF students sign up to give a preparatory workshop in Italian schools to classes that were to go and see the children's opera *Where The Wild Things Are*. Organized by Vittoria Tettamanti, SUF, the workshop involved didactic activities to help children apprehend the language and interact with the American students. It was also great fun for all involved. The children loved it. SUF students were enthusiastic.

Fast forward to spring 2010: fifteen SUF volunteers, accompanied by Tettamanti, head out to help rebuild L'Aquila, in Abruzzo, a town still reeling from the devastation of a major earthquake that struck on April 6, 2009.

What happened in the years in between is nothing short of remarkable. In fall 2005 enquiries to the area schools for further participation on our part were very well received. Throughout the fall 2005/spring 2006 semesters students made the rounds again, this time reading *Snow White*. The SUF Story-Telling Volunteer Program was officially born in the spring semester of 2006—with SUF students going to fifty-one elementary classrooms in one semester.

Through Tettamanti, always on the lookout for opportunities to reach out and break cultural barriers, the program has gradually expanded. The Storytelling Volunteer Program became a component of a larger service learning opportunity. The SUF Volunteer Program now includes participation in Rehabilitation through Creativity (a laboratory where students help female ex-prisoners create dolls to sell them), Il Libro Parlato (students record themselves reading books in English for a non-profit national center which distributes books on tape to people with sight disabilities all over Italy), Seeds of Legality (students volunteer their time and labor working on Sicilian farmland that has been confiscated from the Mafia) and Soup Kitchen, offering hot meals to the homeless.

Fall 2007 saw students involved in Corri la Vita, a Florentine marathon raising funds for victims of breast cancer. Organizers were so impressed by the students' involvement that they specifically invited SUF students to help out for the Florence Marathon, dedicated to raising funds for the disabled.

Tettamanti said she had dreamed of involving SUF students in volunteer efforts in Abruzzo ever since the earthquake hit. "After having seen our students work side by side with Italian volunteers in the Florence Marathon and the Corri la Vita Marathon last semester, it finally felt like the time was right."

In Abruzzo SUF students gave it all—muscle, sweat, tears, and love. Some shoveled dirt to lay the foundation for temporary housing, while others built fences, helped move furniture out of ruined homes, or read and played with children. Still others knocked down walls, hoping





to alleviate some of the sadness that had a hold over this city. Meals were loud, fun affairs at communal tables with the Italian volunteers, followed by song and laughter. At night students slept in “containers,” metal structures akin to storage units. Tettamanti said the entire experience was extremely moving: “We all came back with memories that will stay in our hearts forever. It has been one of the most intense and rewarding experiences I have had in my 22 years with SUF.”

Students unanimously agree that this intense two-day trip, although brief, was nothing short of a life-changing experience. Kirsten Laaspere, Bates College, said, “In Abruzzo we worked alongside dedicated Italian volunteers literally helping to rebuild a city. No longer are we simply visitors here; we are now a part of Italy.”

Perhaps Joshua Jovanelly, USC, best sums up the students’ experience in Abruzzo: “The work we did last weekend put only a small dent in the long list of tasks L’Aquila still requires. But the people we met—the friendly, fellow Italian volunteers, the perseverant citizens—opened my eyes to the power of volunteering to move buildings and shape lives in ways that even an earthquake cannot.”

After the success of the weekend in Abruzzo, Tettamanti accompanied volunteers to four elementary schools in March and April for SUF’s signature storytelling sessions, where they read, and taught, in English *I Wish that I Had Duck Feet*, by Dr. Seuss.



What does the future hold for the SUF Volunteer Program? Tettamanti admits to having new projects in the works. “I’m always looking for new opportunities for our students to see Italian culture from different points of view.”

Left: Marina Perez, Tufts University wheels dirt in place to be used in laying a new foundation in Abruzzo.

Top left: Abruzzo

Top right: Sarah Moore, Wheaton College, makes a doll in a laboratory organized to help female ex-inmates return to society.

Bottom: Kendra Parzen, Pomona College, Bianca Rappaport, Syracuse University, and Allison Glass, Syracuse University, with a captive audience during a storytelling session in L’Aquila, Abruzzo.

On the cover: SUF students stain wooden boards destined for use in new housing for the residents of L’Aquila.

## SUF's *It's All About You* Celebrates Outstanding Students

*Complimenti* to the students nominated as Outstanding this semester. The Coluccio Salutati Prize, in memory of the great Florentine humanist and Chancellor of the Republic best known for his love of learning and capacity to wield knowledge for the benefit of his fellow citizens, recognizes students who have aspired to the highest level of integration into the Italian culture, and who have demonstrated academic achievement through their performance in class.

“Outstanding” students are also chosen by their respective coordinators from the Internship Program (Debora Spini), the Volunteer Program (Vittoria Tettamanti), and the Italian Department’s *Lettore per un Giorno Program* (Loredana Tarini).

The students were presented with certificates and SUF merchandise during a ceremony held as part of the SUF student celebration event, *It's All About You*.



### Coluccio Salutati Prize

Logan Skirm, Whitman College  
Joshua Jovanelly, USC  
Ashley Juavinett, Lafayette College  
Quaneece Calhoun, Williams College

*Read the essays in their entirety, pages 6-9*

### Frammenti: Video Contest

This semester the Italian Department launched *Frammenti*, the first SUF video making contest. Said Loredana Tarini, Coordinator of the SUF Italian Department, “*Frammenti* was born from the idea that culture can be understood through images, and that these images can define a culture. One can perceive a sense of Italy through elements of ordinary life.”

Tarini stresses that this project is in line with the spirit of the SUF Italian Department where students are the active protagonists of their Italian language classes and bring their experiences to their classroom as subject matter for discussions in the Italian language.

First Place went to the team of Sarah Moore, Wheaton College, and Cristina Aggazzotti, USC.

Two teams tied for second place: David Byrne, Tara Daly, Emma Kelly, all from Loyola University Maryland; and Kirsten Laspeere, Bates College, and Alexa Adler, Indiana University. Third place went to the duo Lucas Barefoot, Syracuse University, and Ross Yogel, Syracuse University.

The winners were announced during the Outstanding Student Ceremony.



### Outstanding Interns

Ashley Juavinett, Lafayette University  
Blair Benson, Syracuse University  
Samantha McQueen, Syracuse University  
(as a team)

Abigail Hansen, Wellesley College  
Courtney Harris, Johns Hopkins University

### Outstanding Volunteer

Allison Glass, Syracuse University

### Outstanding *Lettore del Giorno*

Lonnie Ko, USC  
Kenley Stark, Hamilton College

## Winners of the Second Juried Art Competition in Studio Arts



The judges of the second Studio Arts Competition had their work cut out for them. Paula Bortolotti (Art Critic and Curator), Valentina Gensini (Freelance Curator), and Reagan Wheat (Director-On-Site, Washington University) were to have chosen one winner for the spring 2010 semester. Instead they felt compelled to choose two. Nick Kraczyna, STA Coordinator, announced with pride that the work exhibited this semester really put the jury members in a difficult position: “The two winners were chosen out of thirteen semi-finalists. It was impossible to select only one winner.”

Jisoo Ha, Parsons School of Design, won for two of her photographs, and Erin Mallea, Loyola Marymount University, (Intermediate Painting) won for her triptych *Is There Magic?*.

### Studio Arts Winners

Top: Jisoo Ha, Parsons School of Design, (Introductory Photography)

Left and below: Erin Mallea, Loyola Marymount University, (Intermediate Painting)

## To Walk a Mile in Mine

Welcome.

It's one of the first words you see when you enter a new place

And that's the first thing I wanted to feel.

But at times that was the last thing felt.

I feel like such a disgrace walking these streets as a million daggers

From a million eyes, pierce into my experience.

Not to generalize, but I have no idea what actually lies behind their gaze

I just know it fills me with grief.

**Struggle** of any kind is **hard** to deal with,  
but it's especially hard in a **new place**.

Just one more place where my skin is the issue, never can it be cells and tissue

Instead it's the reason I don't like to walk around alone.

Those eyes look at me as if I should be selling them Kleenex –

Or perhaps something even more sinister.

Am I that evil? I'm just an American. But apparently not at first glance,

Not until I open my mouth to speak my broken Italian with my thick American accent.

Sometimes in crowded places I call a friend just so people can hear me speak English,

And unasked questions can float away—like my comfort.

This is the issue no one ever wants to talk about; there was no orientation session for this.

Quietly it gets brushed under the rug because racial tensions are supposed to be left in America,

And I wish it was left there too.

It makes it much harder to enjoy the glories of Florence.

The Duomo. Gelato. The Accademia. Fiesole. Narrow Streets. The Uffizi. Pasta. Exclusion.

You're supposed to find yourself when you study abroad,

Instead I find myself trying to find somewhere to just *be*.

But I've realize that no such place exists.

America is a melting pot and I am that pot.

Who knows how many ingredients flow through my veins?

So it's in vain to go searching for a place composed of me.

It is more important to search for understanding.

It's hard for most people to fully comprehend the journey of someone else.

Hard to imagine the wind against their face,

The tears sliding down their cheeks,

The pain in their hearts.

But what has meant the most to me are those who *try* to comprehend.

In America racial tensions are like a birth right and you learn how to live with it.

But here in Italy, it's much too strange to arrange in a neat little box,

And so I aim to piece together as many letters of acceptance as I can.

Now the wind on my face becomes sunshine,

And my tears have stopped flowing,

And my heart knows no emotion but joy.

Struggle of any kind is hard to deal with, but it's especially hard in a new place.

Two crimes of the same spine—judge and be judged.

But I would much rather live, much rather embrace the differences than hide from them.

Every day is a struggle to integrate myself into Italian culture,

But every day the pieces of this puzzle come closer to forming the bigger picture,

Welcome.

It first happened on a bus.

Just a few weeks after arriving in Florence, I hopped on the 17 around Via Sirtori for the first time to make my way into town. The seats were all occupied, but there was plenty of standing room, so as the bus rattled and rocked along the uneven pavement, I took my place near the center, swaying with each turn of the huge vehicle. At the first stop, two people got on, an old Italian couple. Then a few young women at the next stop. Then some more people at the next. With each successive stop, the space around me in the center grew tighter and more compact. By the time we hit the stop on Vialle dei Mille, the bus was full—hardly any room to turn around. Too bad for anyone else trying to take this bus, I thought to myself. This bus couldn't handle any more passengers. At the next stop, maybe 15 people flagged down our bus. They were just going to have to wait for the next one, I thought. Oh, how naïve I was.

The 15 people—it might as well have been 20—crammed, pushed and squeezed into the bus's three entrances. Maybe a few people got off, but we had obviously gained a great deal of company. The space around me tightened some more, my tiny circle of personal space receding. To my disbelief, the same thing happened at the next stop. Ten more people—somehow, someway—packed into every little crevice, pushing me ever closer to the people around me. I strained my neck to view the back of the bus and saw men, women, and children disappear into the mass and join our herd of city goers. I just didn't understand where they were putting people back there. There was no more room.

I didn't **confront Italian culture**. Italian culture **confronted** me. It first happened on a bus. It surrounded me. It **enclosed** me. It made me **uncomfortable**.

At the next stop, I was jostled and twisted as a wave of people exited, only to be followed by 25 more people getting on the bus. I turned around to let someone pass by and found myself face to face with a breathtakingly gorgeous woman. Back then I still suffered from the delusion that I would be able to woo an Italian girl during my stay here. Forced together by an impossibly overcrowded bus on a shared journey, we stood only centimeters apart. I stammered a feeble "Ciao." She just rolled her eyes at me and got off at the next stop.

I didn't confront Italian culture. Italian culture confronted me. It first happened on a bus. It surrounded me. It enclosed me. It made me uncomfortable. It made my body temperature rise. It made me rethink a preconceived notion. It made me thankful I wasn't claustrophobic. But after accepting these discomforts, after overcoming my apprehensions, I found something beautiful, something I had never seen before, something I was in fact incapable of seeing before then.

It was time for me to get off the bus. When I did it was like stepping into Florence for the very first time, as if that bus had taken me there and dropped me off. The fresh, cold January air was a relief to my lungs and my body welcomed the freedom of movement. Despite how out of place I truly was—a kid used to the privacy and comforts of his own car, a kid who had never been away from Los Angeles for more than a few weeks at a time suddenly and solidly existing in a foreign environment halfway round the world—at the moment, I felt like I belonged. I felt a greater understanding of myself and the world that surrounds me.

I've taken the bus hundreds of times since then. And in many ways, I am still on that bus and always will be.

## Reinventing the Bicycle Wheel

I bought a bike within a week and half of living in Florence. In fact, I knew before I landed that I would get one; not only was it a practical way of getting around, but it was also a clear assertion that I was more than a visitor here. I hoped to “expand my cultural horizons,” “become a worldly citizen,” and “explore Italian culture,” but when I used these phrases in my application, I did not grasp the weight of their meaning. Though I was consistently told that studying abroad would be a life-changing experience, that idea seemed far-fetched and dramatic. Now, at the end of my semester in Florence, I understand this concept of cultural exploration and it is through this understanding that I have been undeniably changed.

Before coming abroad, I defined myself by my context: a middle-class suburban family, a liberal arts college in Pennsylvania, and more generally, American culture. When I came to Italy, I was removed from this framework, and I found myself with little intrinsic connection to the places, people, or culture around me. Developing a relationship with Florence was like most relationships, requiring work and a continued commitment to transcending language and cultural barriers. When I needed to find a *supermercato*, I studied a map of Florence, hopped on my bike, and hobbled down the cobblestone streets. When I could not locate the *supermercato*, I asked someone in Italian. When I finally found the *supermercato*, I pulled out my Italian-English dictionary to make sure I was buying the right shampoo. Everything required an extra step, but each failure and success was another block in my foundation. Unlike at home, I had to ask questions, inquire for justification, and intentionally construct everything I knew about Florence and Italian culture. Through this process, I have built a meaningful relationship with this city.

Granted, building this new framework was challenging. Life in Italy was filled with oddities that disagreed with everything I knew before: not exchanging greetings on the sidewalk, using *avere* instead of *essere*, writing the day before the month, and eating cookies for breakfast. Slowly, I began to sift through my own cultural norms. Why is it that most Americans smile at each other, even when they are complete strangers and may be having a bad day? In the U.S., a smile is often feigned, whereas in Italy its relative infrequency marks it with sincerity. Or, when I say I “am” cold, do I really mean I *am* the essence of something cold? Maybe the Italian way is better – I “have” cold. Also, does it really make sense to place the month before the day? Sometimes, you just need to know what date it is, and the month itself is less important. And cookies for breakfast, well, who could argue with that?

Developing a relationship with Florence was like most relationships, requiring work and a **continued commitment** to transcending language and cultural barriers.

For me, studying abroad is more than just getting on a plane for eight hours and landing in another country. It is a process of questioning and deconstructing the social norms that I have always known, and thereby defining myself within this new context. As a result, I have learned where my socially constructed world ends and my inner self begins. In my opinion, personal growth occurs when you can separate the external from the internal; studying abroad provides a perfect medium for this revelation. While establishing a relationship with Florence, learning the language, and deciphering cultural norms, I am also learning the aspects of myself that are consistent across cultural boundaries. With these personal discoveries, and an enhanced understanding of how to connect with a foreign world, I am slowly reinventing myself as the “worldly citizen” that I once wrote about. Through studying abroad and disconnecting myself from my previous cultural framework, I have not only learned the intricacies of Italian life, but I have also developed the skills and understanding to interact with any other culture I encounter. Purchasing a used *bicicletta* from a local bike vendor was my first step in truly understanding how life-changing cultural exploration occurs. Once you know how to ride the bike, you can get anywhere.

*Italian Lesson #1 – Dove?*

First week of orientation. Armed with three weeks of independent Italian study and an only occasionally reliable sense of direction, I take to the streets of Firenze. Mistake. En route from the orientation hotel to school, it becomes plain the Villa Rossa does not sit along the Arno, on either bank. Ex-Boy Scout that I am, the map provided only succeeds in further confusing my already muddled sense of location. Less than forty-eight hours after arriving in Italy, lost and alone in a strange city, I am ready to declare myself the program's first victim.

A park looks familiar—a thought forms that there should be a cemetery nearby. Looking up and down the length of Via Vittorio Alfieri, I cannot decide which direction should take me there. I feel stymied and mystified, but my raw surge of survival adrenaline pushes me to do the desperate: attempt to speak with the natives. (Three months later, has the adrenaline ever left?) Fortunately, one is at hand. “Scusi,” I ask *la donna*; “Dove sono io?” As we hunch over the enormous tourist-sized map together, my sense of elation at having communicated is so great that when the woman succeeds in locating us, I joyfully thank her... and head in the opposite direction to school.

I have conquered the use of “dove”.

I am loath to **summarize the semester** as if it were finished ... **faced with having to leave** Italy, the only conclusion I can make is that I **have to come back**.

*Italian Lesson #2 – Irregular Conjugations*

Several weeks into the program, all my confusion and disorientation from being in Italy congeal into my first ever ear infection. Hours prior to meeting friends for the evening, at six o'clock exactly my right ear closes, blocking all sound. That night, I hover on the edge of sleep, rolling my head as if playing the game to stop the ball from entering the hole. After hours of tossing, I dream I am trapped in a maze covered in fog. I realize with horror that in order to escape I must conjugate irregular Italian verbs, none of which I have learned yet. The dream has become a nightmare.

*Italian Lesson #3 – Volere*

Want is a tricky matter. I initially wanted to come to Italy to learn the language and to meet the people, and that is what I have tried to do. However, after the initial thrill of language study, there has come a sense of disappointment. Each conversation, it is never long before I realize my limits of communication. I can ask how someone is feeling, but unless the answer is “Well”, I find myself at a loss; I cannot offer even the smallest words of friendship or comfort that any native of a language knows. Linguistically, the only safe ground is unfortunately a language of consumption. I can want a pizza, but wanting to speak with Italians is another matter completely.

*Italian Lesson #4 – Da vs. Per*

“Sono a Firenze *da* tre mese.” Somehow this phrase (and its implications) has come to haunt the countdown to the end of the program. Having finally reached the level to express how long I've been in Florence, I find myself about to leave. I am loath to summarize the semester as if it were finished, drawing some conclusion or tidy morale from it; faced with having to leave Italy, the only conclusion I can make is that I *have* to come back. Instead of conceiving of my time here as closed, in the way one would use the Italian “per” – “Sono stato a Firenze *per* tre mese” – I have to recognize how what I have learned cannot be compartmentalized into the past. Tourists leave Italy by finishing their travel logs; as a student, I must leave by making sure I have plenty of space for later. Even without immediate plans to return, even if one *never* returns, this impulse feels like the only genuine lesson to communicate.



## Simone Anselmi

Simone Anselmi, along with the ISTUD (Istituto Studi Direzionali) Business School in Stresa, is conducting an international training and coaching project for Pirelli Tyre S.p.A. this year. Pirelli Tyre belongs to the Pirelli Group (tyres, real estate and other high-tech activities), an Italian multinational company with 135 years of industrial experience, operating worldwide in more than 160 countries. The project, entitled “Rainbow,” will primarily help the employees of the contact center in implementing the new customer service vision. The vision for the customer service is to shift from a purely operational function to a strategic role; in other words to take advantage of every contact opportunity the company has with its customers. The project will be launched in 2010 in 6 countries: Italy, France, England, Spain and Turkey. Simone will be the Coach of the Italian contact center and will be responsible for project methodologies that will involve all the six countries.

## Matteo Duni

Matteo Duni organized the panel *Witches and Devils in Renaissance Italy: Between Repression and Disbelief* for the Renaissance Society of America’s annual meeting in Venice (Apr. 7-10). As part of the panel he also delivered the paper “The Inquisitor as Editor: Francisco Peña and the Question of Witchcraft in the Late Sixteenth Century,” which discusses the role of the influential lawyer and editor of inquisitorial texts, Francisco Peña, in shaping the policy of the Roman Inquisition vis-à-vis the crime of witchcraft. The paper showed how Peña managed to ground the Inquisition’s new approach in a careful balance of traditional demonology and cautious skepticism, seeking to avoid the excesses of the witch-hunt without explicitly denying its theological foundations. Matteo was pleased with the outcome of the panel, which featured two of the most renowned Italian experts on the Inquisition’s history, Guido Dall’Olio (Università di Urbino) and Vincenzo Lavenia (Università di Macerata). “I think our papers went a long way towards showing the complex and multifaceted role the Roman Inquisition played at the end of the Renaissance. While it never gave too much credit to witchcraft as a serious offence it devoted substantial energies to the repression of doctrinal error and dissent, meting out the harshest punishments not on witches, but on free thinkers and disbelievers.”



## Charles Ewell

Charles Ewell and his colleague Laurel Taylor (University of North Carolina at Asheville) recently published an article on the archeological excavations that they have been directing outside of Lucca for the past five years. The article, entitled, “Excavations at the Project of 100 Roman Farms, Lucca Italy: The 2006-2008 Seasons at Palazzaccio” was published on the website *FastiOnline Documents and Research*. This site is a catalogue of all the ongoing excavations in Italy, North Africa and the Balkans. The site of Palazzaccio was inundated from the 3<sup>rd</sup> C.E. to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, forming the biggest lake in Tuscany. When it was drained, the site yielded important new information about the agricultural life in the region around ancient Roman Lucca that has continued to expand with each ongoing season.





### Carlotta Kliemann

This past March in Milan the XVII edition of the *Sguardi Altrove* Film Festival was held. The festival is an annual event dedicated to women filmmakers from around the world (also contributing this year to the Triennale d'arte Bovisa was an important project on China, with everything from video art to photography).

Carlotta F. Kliemann was part of the Jury for the section *Le donne raccontano*, the international award for documentaries, which included medium and feature films by the most diverse directors, notably from Iran, Mexico, Mongolia, and the U.S. It was a wonderful opportunity for Carlotta to watch, compare and evaluate professional films, which also served to confirm her opinion regarding female documentary film makers' unique talent in combining personal history with relevant national issues.

*Sguardi Altrove* Film Festival: [http://www.sguardialtrove.it/eng/filmfestival\\_cinema\\_2010/sections.asp](http://www.sguardialtrove.it/eng/filmfestival_cinema_2010/sections.asp)



### Sara Matthews-Grieco

In the context of the Renaissance Society of America annual conference in Venice (7-10 April 2010) Sara Matthews-Grieco presented a short paper entitled: 'Culture Erotiche e Arte nel Cinquecento' at a workshop held at the Future Center on the subject of a recent book by Joanne Ferraro: *Nefarious Crimes, Contested Justice. Illicit Sex and Infanticide in the Republic of Venice, 1557-1789* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008). Sara later acted as Respondent for two successive sessions entitled: "Continuity and Change I & II: The Printing Press and Early Modern Visual Culture." She also organized a panel with the title: Communicating Without Words: Sounds, Sight, and Gender in Renaissance Italy, chaired by Elissa Weaver, current RSA Discipline Representative for Gender Studies. Participating in this panel were European Renaissance scholars: Valérie Boudier (Centre d'histoire et Théorie des Arts École Pratique Des Hautes Études), Philippe Canguilhem (Université De Toulouse-Le-Mirail), Flora Dennis (University of Sussex), Silvia Evangelisti (University of East Anglia) and Stefano Lorenzetti (Conservatory of Music of Vicenza).



### Stefania Talini

The photograph "Casablanca" by Stefania Talini, was selected for inclusion in the de Saisset (Santa Clara University) Museum's winter 2010 Exhibition, "Just In: Recent Acquisitions from the Permanent Collection." As the title suggests, "Just In" features works that are new to the collection. The pieces chosen for exhibition have been acquired within the last two years and many have not shown previously at the de Saisset. Artists represented in this exhibition include Lita Albuquerque, Ad Reinhardt, Patsy Krebs, Gregory Edwards and Andy Warhol. The exhibition reflects the diversity and breadth of the de Saisset Museum's collection, as well as the generosity of its members and donors.

On April 14, the Melbookstore on Via Cerretani inaugurated a photography exhibition by Stefani Talini, dedicated to the most renowned and innovative Italian rock band, Litfiba. The exhibit presents a unique gallery of images of the performance (back-stage and live), shot during the triumphant "Pirata" and "El Diablo" tours 1989/1991. Some of them have been published in the volumes *Proibito* (Litfiba's biography), in *Perfetto Difettoso* (Piero Pelù's biography), and some have been used for covers, posters, magazines and newspapers. Others are shown for the first time to the public.



Alick M. McLean, Faculty

This marks the 10th year of field study trips to Sicily with Alick McLean and students from his course *The Mediterranean City: Architecture, Ritual and Power*. Four years ago the trip was expanded to include students from the *Italy Since 1870* class, taught by Natalia Piombino.

In 2007 Piombino introduced yet another element to the trip: a visit to Corleone, with students working in fields confiscated from the Mafia. The group was then enlarged to allow students from the classes, as well as volunteers.

Students continue to be extremely enthusiastic about the trip, whether they go as part of a class or as a volunteer. There are many reasons why students choose to volunteer their time and effort in Sicilian fields. For many it is an opportunity to make a moral, political or social statement; for others it is a way to reconnect with the land from which their ancestors came; while for others still, it is a meaningful type of academic and/or community service experience.

Every semester since then, students have worked in fields confiscated from the Mafia with members of the “Lavoro ma non solo” farmers’ cooperative.

For the first time this year the cooperative also provided students with a wonderful farewell dinner of local Sicilian cooking, made from the fruits of their fields. Before and after the group visited Greek and Norman Arab sites in Erice, Segesta, Monreale and Palermo, and ended the trip with a talk with Edoardo Zaffuto, a founding member of the Palermo anti-racket association “Addio Pizzo.”



Top three: field work in Corleone  
Bottom: Greco-Roman theater, Segesta

A few weeks ago, a friend asked me about my favorite thing to do in Florence so far. After scanning through everything in my memory bank since early January—from climbing to the top of the Duomo to seeing the David, I finally landed on an appropriate response.

“I like just walking around,” I answered.

“*Walking around?*” my friend countered. “Well that’s lame. You can do that anywhere.”

Yes, I suppose this is true. I can technically walk around anywhere. But I think it’s safe to say that strolling through strip malls in my hometown of Rochester, New York, or trudging through the snow on my way to class at Tufts doesn’t hold quite the same appeal as a walk through the streets of Florence.

When I found out in January that I would be living 30 minutes away from school, I couldn’t have been more disappointed. My new apartment was miles away from the Florence I had seen in pictures—the Florence I recognized was comprised of narrow streets and flowerpots under every window. I immediately thought of all the time I would be wasting simply walking from place to place—time that could more usefully be spent at every church, monument, or piazza my guidebooks had told me about. It didn’t take long to discover, however, that this morning walk to school was my favorite part of the day.

The commute from my host mother’s house near the stadium to the school’s Villa Rossa is not the most picturesque route in Florence—it is lined with walls of graffiti, spotted with gas stations and stoplights, and lacks the uneven cobblestones that make many of the city’s streets so charming. It is for all these reasons, however, that I find this walk so enjoyable. For despite the wide streets filled with buses and the Vespas that come dangerously close to plowing down pedestrians at every corner, the city somehow remains serene.

Under clear blue skies, I walk past the stadium, look to the left, and see Fiesole, only slightly visible in the distance, peeking through the buildings and reminding me that I’m living in one of the most beautiful regions on earth. I walk past impeccably dressed and incredibly intimidating Italian women and young mothers pushing strollers with their newborn babies inside. I walk past crowded cafés, small shops with fruit displays spilling out onto the sidewalk, and bakeries that take every ounce of my willpower not to enter. The only noises that disrupt this peacefulness are the occasional chimes of bicyclers ringing their bells—often ridden by little, old ladies with bags of groceries in their front baskets.

When I found out in January that I would be living 30 minutes away from school, I couldn’t have been more disappointed. ... It didn’t take long to discover, however, that this morning walk to school was my favorite part of the day.

I can’t help but regret the moment when I finally arrive at the Villa Rossa, signaling that another day’s walk is over. I stand outside the gate for minutes at a time, searching for the keys that seem to disappear daily within my oversized bag and preparing myself for yet another day at school—complete with discussions of the events of the previous night and next weekend’s big plans.

So maybe it’s true that my lameness shines through thanks to the pick of my favorite Florence activity. Maybe these unremarkable city streets don’t compare to the dominance of the Duomo or the beauty of the art hanging on the walls of the Uffizi. Maybe all of this is true... but I think I’ll choose the walk anyway.

## On the catwalk...



Sam Klemmer, Syracuse University, struts his stuff—and a stunning men's leather bookbag—from Infinity, a leather artisan in Florence. The fashion show was organized by Syracuse University students Sarah Johnson and Olivia Kranich (above with Infinity owner Enio Provaroni), as part of a marketing internship with Infinity under faculty supervisor Simone Anselmi, SUF.

## ...on the soccer field...



Photo: SUF intern Charlotte Watts, Emory University

SUF's soccer team competed in a soccer tournament with sixteen teams. SUF made it to the semi-finals. Coach Beth De Felice, Student Life Office, said she is very proud of her players, even if they did not win first place. "This year I was lucky enough to have enough players for two teams. Not only were they extremely talented (most have played soccer at their home universities), they were fantastic sportsmen. They played hard and played well, and I hope that they will take this experience back with them to the States and continue to play."

# ...and on the stage, SUF's got talent

Dorothea Barrett, SUF Faculty

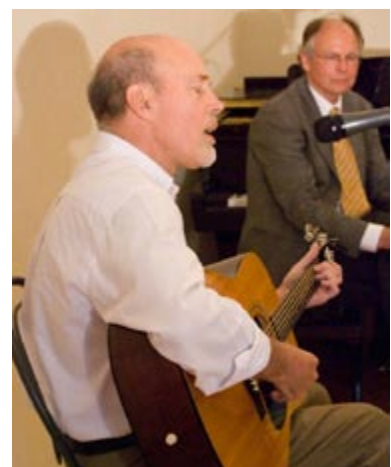
On Tuesday 6 April at 6.15pm, Room 13 of the Villa Rossa was a hot spot of music and theater. The SUF Talent Show was a resounding success, thanks to the hard work and enthusiasm of Beth De Felici, Student Life Office, who organized the event with the help of student and faculty volunteers, Jim Kauffman, the charismatic MC, and, of course, the courageous and talented performers.

Professor Eric Nicholson, wearing a charming blonde wig, gave us Helena's speech from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Ashley Juavinett, who also helped organize the show, sang "Simple Things"—a song of her own composition—and accompanied herself on the guitar. Doug Helman's stunning performance of an operatic aria made the floorboards of Room 13 vibrate. The American and Italian members of Spazio Conversazione sang "Azzurro," a lively Italian song, conducted with panache by Donatella Sommati. Abigail Hansen sang "Wet Sand" by the Red Hot Chili Peppers and played the piano with great skill and energy.

Jackie Evangelisti and Patrick Davis offered something completely different—shall we call it performance art?—entitled "Gluttony." Dressed in togas, they awed the crowd by attempting to eat a kilo of pasta each in five minutes. Neither of them actually licked the plate clean, but it was defeat with honor to roaring applause.

SUF's Interim Director, Michael "The Man, The Legend" Calo, sang a beautiful sad Italian song called "Il Poeta" and accompanied himself on the guitar. Katie Strube amazed us with her clear soprano voice as she sang an aria from *The Phantom of the Opera*. (Her shoes were also amazing.) Sarah Moore sang a song of her own composition about falling in love in Italy and played a mean guitar. The name of Sarah's *inamorato*? Pesto. Finally The Graduates thrilled us with "Living Masterpieces Pageant": before our very eyes, Savonarola burned the vanities, Michelangelo chipped away at the David, and Florentine history unfolded much more smoothly than it did in reality, due to the timely inventions of helpful and interesting friends. A gay time was had by all.

The audience then voted for the three winners, who were announced to deafening applause as we refreshed ourselves with snacks and soft drinks in the entryway of the Villa Rossa. Third place went to Doug Helman (La Scala, here he comes!). The second prize went to Ashley Juavinett, who clearly has a great career before her as a singer, song-writer, and guitarist. And first place went to Sarah Moore, that musical pesto-lover, for singing and playing with such gusto! *Complimenti a tutti!*





Syracuse University students Elena Hozdic, left, and Elizabeth Pane, right, with host mom Loretta Nuti on Piazzale Michelangelo.



The VILLA ROSSA VOICE is the newsletter for the Syracuse University in Florence community. We welcome your questions, comments, articles and/or artwork.

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