

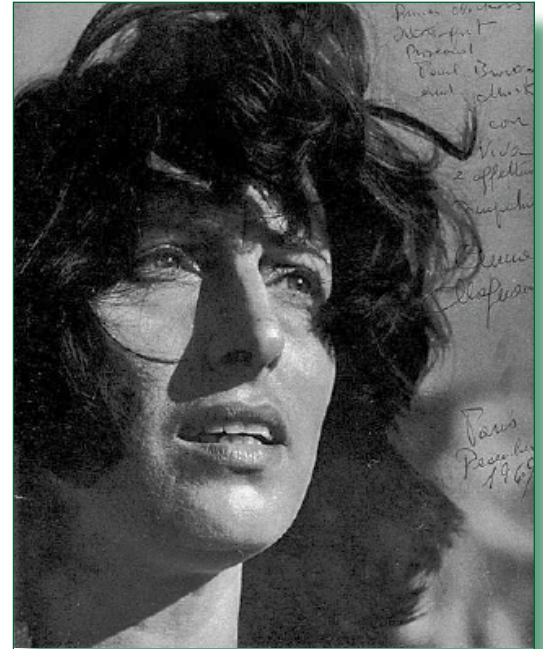
PROGRAM PROFILES

THURSDAY, APRIL 5, 2018

Anna Magnani: First Italian to Win an Academy Award

Jim Boitano, PhD, Cenacolista

Anna Magnani was an Italian stage and film actress. She won the Academy Award for Best Actress, along with four other international awards, for her portrayal of a Sicilian widow in *The Rose Tattoo*. She was referred to as “La Lupa,” the “perennial toast of Rome” and a “living she-wolf symbol” of the cinema. Time magazine described her personality as “fiery,” and drama critic Harold Clurman said her acting was “volcanic.” In the realm of Italian cinema she was “passionate, fearless, and exciting,” an actress that film historian Barry Moshé calls “the volcanic earth mother of all Italian cinema.” Director Roberto Rossellini called her “the greatest acting genius since Eleonora Duse.” Playwright Tennessee Williams became an admirer of her acting and wrote *The Rose Tattoo* specifically for her to star in, a role for which she received an Oscar in 1955.



Jim is of course our former president, author of the *Correnti della Storia* essays in our monthly bulletin, and Il Cenacolo’s 2016 Man of the Year. He has been a popular speaker at our luncheons on many occasions. He holds a BA from Seattle University, an MA from the University of Denver and a PhD from Catholic University. He taught for many years in various positions at Dominican College/University, where he was also academic dean.

THURSDAY, APRIL 12, 2018

Born in Internment

Anna Fiorina Hess

Anna will take us on a WWII journey from Scotland to Italia. She was born in internment in Scotland, when her parents Andy and Kathy Bertellotti had been torn from their warm fish and chip shop in England to be interned in Scotland for five years for nothing more than being Italian. Mussolini sealed their fate when he aligned with Hitler and Nazi Germany.

During WWII we Anna rambles through the rubble of war. About those experiences she wrote a book, *Born in Internment*, originally published in 2015.



She will speak of her family, as they traveled from Scotland to war-torn Italy and she will show us photos. Among their numerous adventures, Anna will tell us about her father's brother, who joined the *Resistenza* and eventually became an interpreter for the American Army. Also about Bruna, his teenage sister, who fled with her parents to the Tuscan hills where she and her friend Lena had a narrow escape from the terrible Massacre at Sant'Anna di Stazzema in 1944.

Anna immigrated to California in 1962 with the grand design of "getting a man and a tan," achieving both in very short order—she met Ron Hess on her first afternoon in California. They are still married, celebrating 53 years of fun in Napa. Their adult children have children of their own. Anna has been passionate about writing throughout most of her life. She took creative writing courses, culminating many years later with *Born in Internment*, (available on Amazon in both paperback and Kindle formats). She will bring her book and we will have a chance to examine and buy it. Of course she would be happy to sign it, too.

THURSDAY, APRIL 19, 2018

How Italy Shaped the Views of a Young American
Admiral John Bitoff, USN, Retired

This is about the magnetism of Italian culture. John Bitoff grew up in Brooklyn, New York and had the usual Italian-American association with school mates, neighbors and restaurants, but his first real experience with Italian culture began as a junior officer visiting Italy while serving aboard U.S. Navy ships beginning in the late 1950s. These visits included the ports of Augusta, Brindisi, Catania, Civitavecchia, Gaeta, La Spezia, Livorno, Messina, Naples, Syracuse and Venice. Of course, these visits often included excursions to the hinterlands of Rome, Pompei, Capri, Nettuno, Pisa, Florence, Lago Como, Garda and Iseo, Porto Fino, Taormina, Cinque Terre, Siena, Perugia, Verona and Vicenza, just to mention a few. His Italian experience culminated with living in the local economy in Naples for three years while serving as Executive Assistant to the NATO Commander-in-Chief of Allied Forces Southern Europe.



This was not a tourist's experience of Italy. Living in the country and amongst some of the most colorful of Italian society transformed him—and his family as well—forever. His perspective

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on food, art, community, government and culture (both Italian and European) was totally altered to the point that when he returned to the United States he experienced an unexpected difficulty readjusting to the culture and values of his home country.

John Bitoff graduated from the Maine Maritime Academy and had a long and diversified career in the US Navy, from commanding destroyers, to executive assignments in the Pentagon and with fleets in the Mediterranean and in Hawaii, rising to Rear Admiral in 1985. He is a graduate of the National War College and holds graduate degrees in business and international security. In 1989 Golden Gate University conferred on him a Doctor of Laws Honoris Causa for “his contributions to the nation as a soldier statesman.” Upon retiring from the Navy he served as Director of Emergency Services for San Francisco and as a Senior Executive with the San Francisco Unified School District. He continues to engage in various service activities.

THURSDAY, APRIL 26, 2018

Lucca, a Repository of Architectural Treasures

David Giannini and Anna Maria Pierini, Cenacolisti

Lucca is one of Tuscany’s and Italy’s most interesting cities because it has preserved much of its historic, predominantly medieval, past. Among its architectural treasures are several churches, most notably the Duomo, San Frediano and San Michele in Foro. David and Anna Maria, both of Lucchese descent, will speak about Lucca’s remarkable urban landscape with a fully illustrative presentation.

David is a longtime Director and Past President of Il Cenacolo, and was Il Cenacolo’s Man of the Year in 2014. He has been nominated to become our next President, beginning in July 2018. He is a member of

the California Bar Association and a graduate of Santa Clara University with a BA in History. He has spent significant time studying and visiting Palladian architecture in Northern Italy and throughout the United States.



Anna Maria Pierini, Executive Director of San Francisco’s Italian Community Service Agency, is a lifelong international traveler, having visited all but one continent. Although she has been inspired by natural beauty, history, art and architecture, and cultural traditions of all the locations she has visited, Lucca touches her heart most deeply. She was Il Cenacolo’s 2017 Woman of the Year.
