

VILLAROSSA VOICE

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY IN FLORENCE NEWSLETTER FOR STUDENTS, FACULTY & STAFF

Michelle
Tarnopolsky,
Teaching
Assistant

Where the Wild Things Are: Not your Every-Day Opera

Even if you somehow managed to miss Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are* as a kid, everyone here at SUF has heard about the classic children's tale by now, especially after the huge success of the opera produced jointly by



the SU Florence and the *Teatro del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino* this past January. Staff and students alike dedicated their time and enthusiasm to the project, proving that studying abroad is not just about soaking up everything a foreign culture has to offer, but also about giving something of our own culture in return. The fruits of their labor were thoroughly enjoyed by SUF employees, family and friends who came decked out in their finest on January 23rd for the gala performance (whose proceeds went to the Meyer Children's Hospital in Florence).

Fast-paced, modern, and experimental, the show was a refreshing twist on the traditional opera. The music was dramatic, sometimes dark and strident, and never boring, even during lighter moments. The set and costumes were a veritable feast for the eyes, doing honor to Sendak's original vision with images that stay with you long after the curtain closes. I confess to having felt somewhat distracted at first by the "full-view manipulation puppetry," being able to see the puppeteers manipulate the body of little Max, the protagonist. But it wasn't long before I stopped noticing and got swept up in the drama and excitement of Max's adventure. I also realized that the exaggerated gestures they were able to produce were incredibly expressive, making the story that much clearer, a kind of "Giotto-esque" approach to opera.

My favorite scene was when Max made his boat voyage to "the place where the wild things are." The combination of moody, dramatic lighting,

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The Meyer Children's Hospital evening gala benefit performance of *Where the Wild Things Are* was a sold out performance, attended by almost 400 people. The directors from the other four DIPA SU centers abroad—London, Madrid, Strasbourg and Hong Kong—all attended. In addition, almost fifty visitors came from SU in New York, including trustees, Friends of Dipa members, the VPA dean Carole Brzozowski, and SU Vice Chancellor and

Provost, Deborah Freund, who, when asked what seeing the performance meant to her, honored us with the following statement:

"...It was for me one of the singularly best academic experiences I have EVER had. It had everything: scholarship; community engagement at all levels; students, faculty, and artistic achievement all at the highest levels. It set a standard for years to come. I will remember it for the rest of my life. I cannot stop thinking about it or talking about it. There simply aren't enough congratulations in the world to reflect the excitement and excellence it all represented."



All "Wild Things" photos by Francesco Guazzelli

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Student Writing

Breaking Barriers

Barbara Deimling
Director, SUF

"Breaking the barriers and sharing the 'diversity'"—this is the title of a report of one of the students who, in the fall of 2004, studied at Syracuse University in Florence, and who was involved in the project of "Where the Wild Things Are."

This student and five others visited numerous classes at Florentine elementary, middle and high schools, introducing Maurice Sendak's book *Where the Wild Things Are* to the school

children, as a preparation for the opera. Together they translated the book, enacted portions, and interpreted it. One of our students wrote about her experience: "I really felt that I shared not only part of my culture but also part of my childhood."

At the same time, four of our interns worked at the day-care center of the Meyer Children's Hospital, creating together with the hospitalized children two paper-maché monsters, which were to be seen in the theater during the performances. One of our students remarked: "The children in the end were most intrigued that we

'talked different', had funny accents, and mixed up our grammar." The children thus learned about diversity, about otherness, and to appreciate that. Our own students learned the same, as one student commented: "In the process I learned to be open-minded and to be culturally aware, and I am so proud that I could share this with the children."

As a foreign academic institution, it is our duty and obligation to make our students aware of cultural differences, confronting them with diverse ways of thinking and of appreciating the world around us. At the same time, we believe

that this educational goal needs to be transmitted to the community and culture which hosts us. This is the reason that for several years now, Syracuse University in Florence, one of the largest and oldest American universities in Florence, has engaged in an active outreach to the Florentine community, to allow Florentines to partake in the academic work of our institution. It is an effort to deepen cross-cultural understanding and to contribute to the cultural life of the city, to learn to appreciate rather than lament our differences.

I am proud to say that this event would not have been possible without the enormous and communal effort of essentially all staff and faculty at Syracuse University in Florence. It created a sense of community and identity, which I had not expected, and I wish to thank everybody for their effort and help, which went well beyond normal duties.

My deep gratitude also extends to the home campus, which has provided support to make this event possible. The funding, time, effort and expertise from Syracuse on both sides of the Atlantic demonstrate that international education is not just a word.

I would also like to thank the *Teatro Maggio Musicale Fiorentino* and the *MaggioFormazione* for their openness and willingness to engage in a completely different venue.

Syracuse University in Florence has a strong relationship with the Meyer Children's Hospital, having worked on various projects together. In fact, the proceeds of the gala evening on January 23 will go to the hospital. My thanks go to the *Fondazione dell'Ospedale Pediatrico Meyer* for their collaboration and support in this project. It has been an adventure for all, stepping across the boundaries of the familiar, walking on new terrain of knowledge, just like little Max, sailing off with his boat to a land where the wild is the ordinary.



Around an island: *Where The Wild Things Are* as performance and educational project

Debora Spini,
Internship
Coordinator;
Translation Dorothea
Barrett

Maurice Sendak's book, with its celebrated illustrations; the animated forest; the Wild Things; the child-puppet Max; his magical voyage to the island; the music of Oliver Knussen; lighting; sets; choreography; song: all these factors

contribute to the charm of this brief fantasy-opera. The opera appealed to people from all age-groups and various cultural and linguistic backgrounds. But what took place when we produced *Where the Wild Things Are* on the stage of the *Teatro del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino* was not only a performance but also the final outcome of a long and complex educational project.

Throughout the summer and autumn, a vast web of ideas and activities has been woven around the show. This multifaceted project has involved not only the various departments of *Teatro Maggio* and the students and professors of Syracuse University (both in Florence and at the home campus in New York State) but also various Florentine institutions. In short, the performance was the result of collaboration among people from a great diversity of backgrounds, on both sides of the Atlantic. In addition to the long collaboration of Syracuse University in Florence (SUF), Syracuse University in New York, *Teatro Maggio*, and the *Associazione MaggioFormazione*, sixteen internships were organized around the performance. Max will not be the only child-protagonist of *Where the Wild Things Are*; in all the performances, many other children were in the theater with him, even though no one was able to see them. The children of the Meyer Hospital were represented in the theater by their work: the 'Wild Things' that were to be seen in the foyer of the theater are the result of a collaborative project involving SUF, *Teatro Maggio*, and the Meyer Children's Hospital. In the fall, four Syracuse University students in the Academic Internship Program completed a project in the play-room of the Hospital. Under the supervision of their art teacher and the play-room staff, the interns helped children to construct the Wild Things of Max's dreams and fears out of papier mache.

One fundamental aspect of the internships in connection with the show has been *OPERAZIONE Do You Speak English?* This project involved the collaboration of the *Teatro Maggio* School Service and the SUF Academic Internship Program in the development of a complex course of preparation for the Tuscan school chil-

dren who were to attend the performance. For quite some time now, SUF has been sending interns into Florentine elementary, middle, and high schools as assistants to teachers of English. However, *OPERAZIONE Do You Speak English?* has been even more extensive than the traditional involvement of Syracuse interns in Florentine schools. In November and December, after preparation of both the linguistic and pedagogical aspects of the project, five student-interns visited schools of different levels in the city and province of Florence. The purpose of these visits was to prepare Tuscan school children for the performance in terms of both linguistic and cultural understanding. Each presentation was aimed at the level of that particular class. The interns were particularly interested in conveying to Italian children what this marvelous book really means to many American children, and that the Wild Things are for them

Around an Island, cont'd pag 14



Faculty Watch

From the College of Arts and Sciences

SU Florence is pleased to announce that as of yet, the following faculty members have been nominated as Faculty Associates in the College of Arts and Sciences at Syracuse University. This nomination process is an ongoing process, and we are still awaiting further nominations.

Molly Bourne
Antonella Francini
Richard Ingersoll
Sara Matthews-Grieco

Jonathan Nelson
Debora Spini
Loredana Tarini
Bruno Wanrooij

The College of Arts and Sciences seeks to recognize and encourage the research and scholarship of the most productive and outstanding scholars who teach in the Division of International Programs Abroad by naming them Faculty Associates in the relevant departments of the College. Two Faculty Associates per year (funded by the Vice Chancellor's office and rotated amongst the various centers and associates) will be invited to the SU campus for public lectures, and a very small fund for travel to conferences will be available through The College of Arts & Sciences. Decisions about who is invited in any given year will be made by an Arts and Sciences committee. Our goal is to recognize the talented researchers and scholars who teach in our programs abroad.

Barbara Deimling



An essay by Barbara Deimling has appeared in the catalogue of the exhibition: ANDREA PALLADIO E LA VILLA VENETA Da Petrarca a Carlo Scarpa

The entry focusses on Giotto's painted building in the scene of the *Renunciation of Worldly Goods by Francesco* in the Bardi Chapel in Santa Croce, stressing the novelty of the architectural design, and interpreting the structure as a precursor of the villa, built only a century later.

Marco Klee Fallani



Professor and painter Marco Klee Fallani has two shows in the month of March. His work will be exhibited in New York City at the International Art Fair, "Artexpos." Fallani's stand will exhibit approximately twenty-five pieces he painted from 2002-2005. The exhibit will then travel to Colgate University, home of the Picker Gallery, with a strong and growing collection of more than 10,000 objects. The Picker Gallery plays a significant role in the teaching mission and the reputation of one the country's leading liberal arts universities.

Faculty Watch

Richard Ingersoll



Professor Richard Ingersoll recently published a volume entitled, “Questioni sulla città diffusa del Valdarno” [Concerning Sprawl in the Valdarno] (Published in Arezzo by Agenzia Architetti Arezzo). The book is the culmination of an extensive analysis of the rapid growth and urbanization of the area up the Arno from Florence, which includes San Giovanni Valdarno, Terranuova Bracciolini, and Montevarchi. The book includes historical maps, photos by the celebrated photographer Gabriele Basilico, Richard’s essays about the area in Italian, as well as a few other essays by other authors and an interview with Italy’s prime urbanist, Bernardo Secchi (architect responsible for the master plan of Siena).

Swietlan Nick Kraczyna



Swietlan Nick Kraczyna has been quite busy lately, exhibiting his work both in Italy and in the States. Last October, Nick was part of an event sponsored by The City of Yonkers entitled, “Celebrating Italian Culture in Yonkers.” His exhibit “Tuscan Landscapes: Views from the Artist’s Window” included paintings and color etchings from Florence and Barga, and was on display from October 1-28, 2004 at the Yonkers Public Library. Nick’s painting entitled “Maggio,” from the series of etchings “Twelve Months on Colleramo,” was chosen as the image on the invitation for this event.

This past December 19, the *III Galleria del Istituto Linguistico Eurocentres* in Palazzo Guadagni held an inauguration for the exhibit for Nick’s “Firenze Personale,” a collection of pieces using various techniques depicting Florentine scenes and places from Nick’s experience here in Florence over a forty year span. The exhibit displayed color

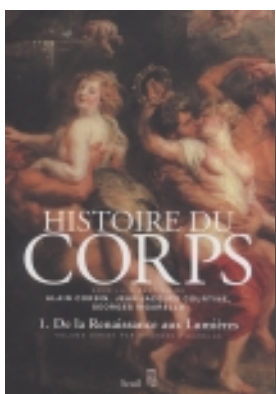
etchings, woodcuts, black and white photographs of the Piazza Santo Spirito before, during, and right after the flood of 1966. The exhibition ran from December 19, 2004 to February 13, 2005.

From February 4-11, 2005, Nick’s work entitled “Icaro e il labirinto di Via Fani” was part of an exhibit at the Palazzo Panciatichi, sponsored by the *Regione Toscana Consiglio Regionale*. This work is part of a series on Icarus, and represents the uncertainty surrounding the kidnapping and subsequent murder of Aldo Moro, President of the Leading Italian Party, *Democrazia Cristiana*, kidnapped and killed by the Red Brigades in the spring of 1978. Whereas the “Firenze Personale” exhibit was a personal exhibit of his work, this exhibit sponsored by the *Regione Toscana* was political. These exhibits were written up in *Il Corriere*, *La Nazione* and *La Stampa* of Torino.

In March, Nick and his students from his summer workshop in Barga (a workshop he has held every July for the past ten years) will exhibit their work at the University of Wisconsin at La Cross. The exhibit features multi-plate color etchings, the focus of last summer’s workshop.

Finally, Nick’s work will be exhibited in Cracow on June 8, in two different shows. To quote Nick, “six exhibitions in a nine month period, and each exhibition is different from the other! If students find some teachers demanding, it is because they themselves demand much of themselves, as both teachers and professionals.”

Sara Matthews Grieco



An essay by Sara Matthews-Grieco - “Corps et sexualité dans l’Europe d’Ancien Régime” - has just appeared in a collective volume: *Histoire du Corps (vol I) De la Renaissance aux Lumières*, edited by Alain Corbin, Jean-Jacques Courtine and Georges Vigarello (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2005, pp. 167-234, 22 illus.).

This essay gives an overview of the variety of sexual cultures that characterised France, England and Italy between the 15th and the 18th centuries. It makes the point that, in a society where marriage was not an option available to everyone, a variety of alternative practices flourished, practices which could either be benignly tolerated or acrimoniously stigmatised according to the age, social class and gender of the individuals concerned.

Faculty Watch

Jonathan K. Nelson

Professor Jonathan Nelson participated in the annual meeting of the CAA (College Art Association), held this year in Atlanta. On February 17, as part of the session on "The Nature of Blockbuster Exhibitions", he gave a paper entitled "The Italian Blockbuster Today: Creative Fundraising for the Impoverished Nobility", a backstage view of the shows he curated in Florence on Michelangelo (2001) and Botticelli and Filippino (2004). To his great surprise, this after-dinner session was...a blockbuster. The large audience, attracted by some superstars on the panel, seemed quite interested in how the "exhibition machine" works in Italy. The next day Jonathan represented DIPA, which hosted a breakfast for the Italian Art Society. As usual, former graduate students from the SUF art history program were very much in evidence at CAA.

Vittoria Tettamanti



SUF Professor Vittoria Tettamanti, in collaboration with Professor Imperatrice Di Passio, of Georgetown University in Fiesole, have just published their book, *Parliamo con la pubblicità* (Soleil Publishing Inc.). The book uses television commercials as the subject material from which students can practice comprehension skills, enrich their vocabulary, improve their oral and written communication skills and reflect on Italian cultural mores and traditions. *Parliamo con la pubblicità* consists of eighteen successful Italian TV commercials, each accompanied by various activities. The book can be used for beginning, intermediate and advanced levels. It also includes a teachers' guide and a DVD of the commercials. The preface of *Parliamo con la pubblicità* was written by Professor Marcel Danese, an important scholar of Italian as a second language at the University of Toronto.

Bruno Wanrooij

In 2004 Professor Bruno Wanrooij edited *La mediazione matrimoniale. Il terzo (in)comodo in Europa tra Otto e Novecento* (Marriage mediation. The 'third wheel' in Europe in the 19th and 20th century), Roma, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2004, for which he also wrote the introduction and a chapter. He also published "The History of Sexuality in Italy (1860-1945)," in Perry Willson (ed.), *Gender, Family and Sexuality: The Private Sphere in Italy, 1860-1945*, Houndsmill-New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

In October 2004 Prof. Wanrooij was invited to talk at a conference in Naples celebrating the 10th birthday of the interuniversity doctoral program on gender studies. He has been invited to serve as the editor of a special number of the *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* about the history of masculinity. He is working also on a chapter about the history of the family in twentieth century Europe for a new series of volumes on the history of the Mediterranean, and on a book about Family life in early 19th century Florence, which will be published by Syracuse University Press. In April he will present a paper about sexual education in Italy at an international conference in Durham (UK).

Option II

Daniel Belenky,
Syracuse University;
Britt Levy, Columbia
University;
Candace Nuzzo,
Georgetown
University

Villa La Quiete remained a Medici outpost up until the middle of the Eighteenth century when the last member of the famous lineage, Anna Maria Luisa, daughter of Duke Cosimo III, often sought refuge amongst its quiet and beautiful Italian-style gardens.

Villa La Quiete is certainly not what one might categorize as the average school. Perched high up on a hill and hidden behind centuries old crumbling walls, it would make a much more appropriate monastery than forum for Italian language studies. Yet, despite this seemingly incongruous exterior, every

morning at 9:00 am students from countries all over the world descend upon *La Quiete* mumbling in foreign tongues of all sorts with an audible word of newly learned Italian thrown in here and there. We make an odd group: Americans, Swedes, Japanese, Germans, and Iranians, among others, all cloistered within walls embellished by the white terra-cotta designs of Giovanni della Robbia. One of the largest factions of students at *La Quiete* is the seventeen Americans from Option II at Syracuse. Most of the Option I students at Villa Rossa have probably never heard of *La Quiete* or the twenty minute commute we make each morning to study Italian amongst a veritable melting pot of other students. Though we knew that *La Quiete* surely had a wealth of history and could see the ample evidence of famous artist's handiwork, we realized that in fact, the students of this *Centro di Cultura per Stranieri* most likely knew very little about its past. A little internet research led to the discovery that our school is not only architecturally unique, but also has links to the Medici.

The Villa was built in the early *Quattrocento* and almost immediately purchased by Pier Francesco dei Medici, the cousin of the famous Lorenzo the Magnificent. According to our source, the Italy Daily online, Pier Francesco used the villa as one of many facilities to store and display much of the ever expanding Medici art collection. As a remaining testament to this artistic history, the Villa still possesses a della

Robbia lunette in one of their main rooms depicting a Doubting Thomas, a panel by Rodolfo Ghirlandaio and a Coronation by Botticelli's workshop. Even the villa's unusual name has an art-derived origin--its mural by Giovanni da San Giovanni entitled "The Quiet that Calms the Wind." *La Quiete* remained a Medici outpost up until the middle of the Eighteenth century when the last member of the famous lineage, Anna Maria Luisa, daughter of Duke Cosimo III, often sought refuge amongst its quiet and beautiful Italian style gardens. These gardens, with their carefully pruned shrubs and trees, are still visible today out the windows of our Italian language classrooms. It is in these classrooms that we students of Option II enhance our understanding of the Italian language, as well as learn about the culture of other countries, and are further prompt-

see Option, pag 15



SUF Option II students,
out and about.
Photographs courtesy of
Options II student
Meghan G. Bean, Tufts
University



the wonderfully stylized waves moving back and forth, and the mysterious, dancing notes in the music helped create the perfect introduction to the magical world Max was entering. A collective murmur of delight escaped the mouths of the predominantly adult audience when the lovable monsters first emerged and our inner child perked up. Their monster version of the “Macarena” dance, furthermore, was just a delight to watch.

I will admit, not having read the book since I was a kid, I had some trouble following the story line, despite its simplicity. While the words were in English, I found myself reading the Italian subtitles to understand what was being sung. Some of this may be due to the accents of the Italian singers, but the fact is that English does not lend itself to opera the way Italian does and is difficult to understand, whatever the accent. There also can be difficulties with the translation. In English





the phrase “wild things,” for example, evokes not just primitive, beastly creatures outside civilization, but it also speaks of a fantastical world created by a fertile imagination, a concept that just doesn’t quite come across in the Italian translation, *cose selvagge*.

Any ideas lost in translation were expressed in an even more engaging way through other mediums, like the strange language spoken by the monsters and brilliantly evoked by the boisterous music, for example. While an Italian nine-year-old that I met at the show didn’t catch that Max was pretending to be a wolf at the beginning, she understood and enjoyed the story as a whole, exemplifying how the success of this opera is as a universal story for children, regardless of the language they speak or the culture they come from.



**Italy: Containing Modernity,
Domesticating America
(Anti-Americanism in Italy since 1943)**

David Ellwood
School of Advanced International Studies,
Johns Hopkins University / University of Bologna

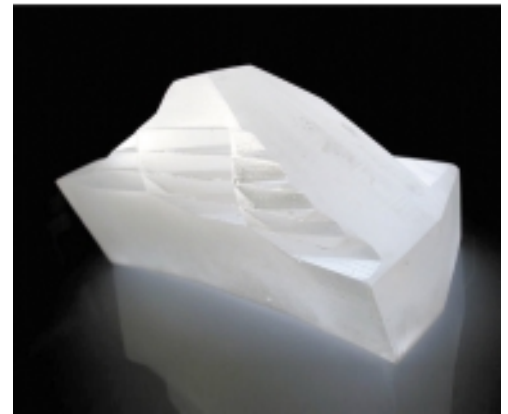
Tuesday March 15
6:15pm
Villa Rossa, Room 15

Reception to follow

syracuse university in florence school of architecture

**B+K, architects
3 to 1 - object, structure, rule**

March 22
Villa Rossa - Room 15



**Going east:
the European
Union's
enlargement
to the
ex-Soviet bloc**

Monika Ewa
Kaminska
Warsaw School of
Economics

Wed, March 30
6:15pm
Villa Rossa
Room 15

Reception
to follow

**SlowFood Italia:
Lecture & Cheese-Tasting
Workshop**
by Sandro Bosticco

Wednesday - March 23 - 6:15pm
Villa Rossa - Room 15

Come and learn about the values and philosophy of SlowFood Italy. Limited space: students must sign up in advance for this event in the Main Office.

Spring 2005 Lectures & Events

"Petra's Concept of History"

Ronald Witt
Senior Fellow, Villa I Tatti, Harvard University
Visiting & Honorary Professor of History, Georgetown, Duke University

Wednesday February 23 - 6:15 pm - Room 15 - Villa Rossa

syracuse university in florence school of architecture

**Adolf Loos and Otto Wagner:
Spoken into the Void and the beginning of
Modern Architecture in Vienna**

August Sanitz
Vienna Academy of Art

Thursday February 24 - 6:30 pm - Room 15 - Villa Rossa

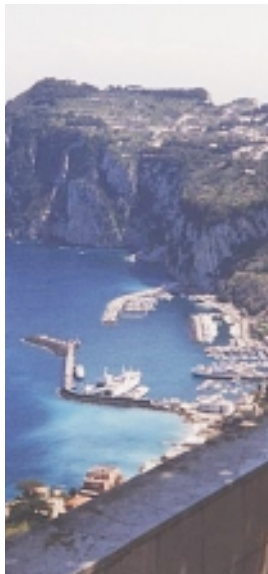
syracuse university in florence school of architecture

High Tech / Low Tech Details in Architecture
Mauricio Cardenas - Architecture Design Research

Tuesday March 1 - 6:15 pm - Room 15 - Villa Rossa

Rethinking the Italian South: Pizza, Mafia, Mandolino?

Molly Bourne
SUF Lecture Series
Coordinator



SUF is planning an exciting series of All-School events dedicated to the theme of the Italian South that will take place in April 2005. These activities, which will run roughly from April 4 - 21, will include special lectures, film screenings, a music concert, exhibitions, cooking classes, and a number of other activities – including a student photography contest -- that all have Southern Italy as their focus. We hope that these events will provide an opportunity to explore the extraordinary cultural richness of Italy's *mezzogiorno*, while also reconsidering critically some of the tenacious stereotypes about this part of Italy. We are defining Southern Italy broadly, to include the regions from Campania (Naples) to Sicily, and everything in between.

Here is a preview of some of the All-School events we are planning:

- Evening concert (Monday, April 4) by renowned *cantautore* Sergio Laccone and his musical group, performing folk/pop songs from Campania and Puglia
- Screening (Monday, April 11) of the classic film *Il Gattopardo* (“The Leopard”), set in 19th-century Palermo
- *La Casa Italiana* in mid-April will be dedicated to the theme of the South
- Lecture (Wednesday, April 13) by social historian John Davis (University of Connecticut), an expert on the Italian South in the 18th-20th centuries
- Evening cooking classes dedicated to the cuisine of Southern Italy (April 5,7, and 10)
- Soccer game (Sunday, April 17) at the Stadio: Fiorentina vs Messina!



Discover the South of Italy: A Photo Contest for SUF Students

Students are invited to take photos (color or black & white) during their trips to the South of Italy of any aspect they wish to emphasize. Photographs must be submitted in printed form, size A4, and be accompanied by a subtitle written in Italian. Photos and subtitles will be judged as an ensemble according to their expressive character, artistic quality, and depth of thought. A committee of professors will select the first, second, and third-place winners. First prize: dinner for two at a restaurant in Florence specializing in Southern Italian cuisine. **DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS:**
Monday April 4 – photos must be submitted to the Main Office by 5:00pm
(Monday April 11 – extended deadline for students on the Sicily trip, who must submit photos to the Main Office by 5:00pm)
Wednesday April 13 – winners announced
Week of April 18 – exhibition of winning photos in the Limonaia

Ask your Italian Professor for further details!



Photo: Alick M. McLeon

...Vincenzo Lagi

Amy Kleine
and Vincenzo Lagi

When asked to comment on the biggest difference he notices between American and Italian university students, the first thing he mentions is the American student's motivation to study something that will lead to a job, and a career.

Of the many staff members students encounter over the semester, there are always some whom you may never have the occasion to meet. Whereas student services staff are here to respond to your questions and needs directly, other

staff members are working behind the scenes to insure that important aspects of the program are working well.

Vincenzo Lagi, Assistant to the Network Manager, is one of these staff members. His office is in the Villa Rossa, on the administrative floor, however, you will not find him there often, as he is usually out in one of the buildings fixing our computers, or making sure that our network (in other words, your access to internet and e-mail!) runs smoothly.

Vincenzo came to Syracuse two years ago replacing his friend Lorenzo Allori. Vincenzo had met Lorenzo in a CISCO certification course they had done together. He and Lorenzo shared not only an interest in computers, but also in music, forming a classic rock band, in which Vincenzo plays electric guitar.

When Lorenzo left the position he recommended Vincenzo to his supervisor, Fabio Landi (our Network Manager) who then introduced Vincenzo to the Director, Professor Barbara Deimling. Both were impressed with Vincenzo and offered him a part-time position immediately. This suited Vincenzo perfectly given that he was building his own clientele as an independent computer consultant, and thus needed the flexibility and reduced hours that his former full-time position as computer technician at Interlco did not provide. Vincenzo accepted on the spot, and began to work at Syracuse in the summer of 2003.

Vincenzo was pleased with this new opportunity to continue working in a technological position, but was even more surprised and delighted by the professional atmosphere he discovered after accepting the position. Vincenzo appreciates the strong sense of collaboration and group effort among staff, and further notes that within our staff one is also always recognized for their individual contribution, and respected for their area of expertise. He even suggests that this sort of collegiality comes from being a staff comprised of a majority of women, rather than simply an "American" sense of teamwork.

Vincenzo himself is an intricate mix of interests, opinions, and aptitudes. Ever since he was little he played music and had a computer. When he graduated from "classic" high school, however,

he chose to study law at the University of Florence, based on a pure interest in law, rather than any specific career objective. Even now, he does not plan to pursue a career in law.

However, he does note that what was once just an interest resulting in a choice of study, has now proven beneficial in regards to his current profession. There is much he has learned about the legal aspects of the technological world, particularly the specific area of computer forensics. In fact, Vincenzo contrasts his own approach to university with that of the American students he observes here at Syracuse University. When asked to comment on the biggest difference he notices between American and Italian university students, the first thing he mentions is the American student's motivation to study something that will lead to a job, and a career.

Vincenzo is not unlike other Italian students he knows who first choose what interests them, without a detailed plan or concern that they will then find a job in that specific field. He sees the American student as being much more directed, with precise professional goals. He also observes that the American student appears "calmer," more serious, more respectful of the collegial institution in general. He does however note that whereas in respect to academics and professional planning the American student appears more mature, more prepared than the Italian student, in respect to their own personal development they are perhaps a little less mature.

Vincenzo's knowledge of America, and Americans, prior to coming to Syracuse, has been that which has been transmitted through music, although he also observes that when you grow up in Florence, contact with the numerous Americans living and studying here is inevitable. When asked if he would like to live or study in the States (or other country), Vincenzo smiles, providing a very neutral response, "Yes, absolutely, in a place like Canada, which is a cross between the U.S. and Alaska."

Future plans for Vincenzo, however, do not include a sojourn abroad, but rather the dream of one day owning his own computer company. For now, however, we hope Vincenzo remains here at Syracuse with us!

The Daily Commute

Laura McDowell,
Kenyon College

The alarm shrills at 7:00 am....again. I shut it off and roll over in one swift movement hoping to close my eyes for just a few more minutes. I barely open one eye, 7:45 am. This time, I jump out of bed into my clothes, grab a breakfast

of cookies and milk, and I'm out the door to the bus stop at 8:00 am. I wait for the bus in a haze thinking about my day to come: three classes until 6:00 in the evening. As the number 20 pulls up I glance through the windows. People are smashed against each other, gripping to poles through a mess of briefcases, winter coats, and school bags. I take a deep breath and push my way through them. My backpack knocks into teenagers and business men as I squirm through the barely visible path to the center of the bus. Today I am lucky; I grab a seat close to a window and turn my eyes outward as I sit through the half an hour of speeding and halting towards school.

So begins my typical morning traveling to the *Centro Culturale*. After days of this routine, I've come to enjoy that brief time I have everyday on the bus; I know the route so well. The beginning is slow; there is a stop for practically every half block. Before Piazza San Marco is the local high school. Teenagers in baggy jeans with their portfolios jump off the bus to join the throngs of students milling outside the school. Adolescent boys lean casually against their scooters. Girls stand in groups laughing and gossiping.

From there, the bus takes me to San Marco. People run through the piazza past a parked police car to catch the bus before the doors slide close. Past San Marco, I barely see the Fortress through the traffic. Almost half way there. The local *lavanderia* is on the left, where every morning the owner dusts the neon green sign after unlocking the gate. The bus turns right at the corner and enters a swarm of cars, trucks, and scooters.

We continue on, passengers are in complete silence reading their papers or plugged into their Discman headphones, everyone is lost in another world. The silence is broken by a yelp; a profanity is said in Italian. My eyes turn toward the inside of the bus. Three seats in front of me a man sits, cap pulled tightly over his eyes, and gray coat zipped up to his chin. Eyes flicker towards the man, and then many turn back to their paper. His eyes roam with anxiety from the inside of the bus to the mov-

ing scene out the window. When we pass the high school he laughs and gestures wildly, pointing at the looming adolescents. People shuffle by his seat as they make their way out the door; passengers offer a wave or a smile. He has been on this bus before, many know his name.

A young American student sits next to him. He greets her, throughout the ride mumbling phrases, his words of wisdom, to her. She doesn't understand, yet smiles and nods, not because she is uncomfortable, but merely it is her gesture of sympathy and kindness. Another nervous profanity comes from his mouth; he turns towards the window, gazing at the passing scenes, seemingly unaware of what he has said. The bus screeches, halts, and lurches back into motion. For stop after stop the man continues on the line. His paranoid eyes search the streets for recognition. At the next stop, he jumps up, climbing over the young girl next to him, and races to be the first at the door. Gripping the pole, his eyes once again move quickly over the passing scene. An older woman in a fur coat begins to speak with him. Her slow words and soft smile are in contrast to his nervous laughter and anxious voice. She points out street signs as the bus continues on. A look of recognition passes over his face. As the bus steams to halt and the door opens, she slowly climbs off. He turns, with a quick nod waves to his audience of passengers, and jumps down after her. She smiles, points him in one direction, and continues on her way. He tightens his coat and walks off, a calmer man after his daily commute.

The traffic is thick and packed with every means of transportation. A middle aged woman rides by on her bicycle, her fur coat creating tails in the wind behind her. People of every age, women in stilettos or men with children in their laps, whiz by on scooters. Cars honk and speed up aggressively throughout the traffic mess. Over the bridge, we pass the elementary school where parents tug the hands of tightly bundled up children skipping and hopping behind them. The bus clears out on Viale Morgagni as the crowd spreads in every direction, people off to work or to catch the next

The motive behind this web of ideas and activities, behind the whole complex and eclectic project of *Where the Wild Things Are*, is a crucial one: SUF wants to be an integral part of the living fabric of the city.

familiar and beloved figures. The project involved nine elementary schools, three middle schools, and three high schools. The interns visited a total of twenty-five classes and introduced several hundred Florentine children and teenagers to Sendak's enchanted forest. SUF students were also involved in the more artistic aspects of the show. Four students helped the artists responsible for creating the lighting, sets, and puppets. For the students, this was a unique learning experience. The photographs exhibited in the foyer of the theater testify to these months of work, study, and creativity. Many of them were the work of SUF interns as well: two photography students, together with professional photographers, followed Max and the Wild Things through all the phases of their development before the show. The motive behind this web of ideas and activities, behind the whole complex and eclectic project of *Where the Wild Things Are*, is a crucial one: SUF wants to be an integral part of the living fabric of the city. Members of the SUF academic community all agree that their students should be more than long-term tourists, more than just consumers of culture. After nearly half a century in Florence, SUF wants its students to see the need – and to feel the desire – to give something back to the city, not simply to consume its cultural riches, as if it were only a museum. This, then, is the purpose of the Academic Internship Program, which places around forty students each semester in the most diverse work situations – from political parties to museums; from fashion houses to non-governmental organizations to schools. SUF believes that learning at university level need not be limited to the classroom: it can also come as a result of participation in the most diverse aspects of professional and cultural life; the university should not be an ivory tower; rather, it should be in constant communication and interaction with the community that sustains it. This view is also becoming popular in Italian universities. SUF and *Teatro Maggio* have met for the first time on the island of the Wild Things, but the moment when Max comes home and finds his dinner still hot certainly will not be the end of this collaboration.



ed to look more closely at the American society from which we come. The professors and staff at the *Centro* have created a unique academic environment for their students, in which our learning of Italian develops through cultural study — watching films, reading novels and newspapers, attending after school lectures and site visits, and most of all, having discussions with our fellow students. One professor at the *Centro*, Dr. Jacopo Berti, begins each class asking his students what they did the previous evening, which then leads to discussions about topics ranging from movies, to drug use, to relationships, to stereotypes and to racism. No topic is taboo, and no one will criticize you for what you say...as long as it's in Italian! Indeed, since the only common language among all the students is Italian, we are constantly challenged—and rewarded—trying to express ourselves, even when it seems nearly impossible to do so outside of our primary language. In our classroom, the students feel comfortable expressing their opinions and the role of instructor has developed into one of friend and mentor as well. Berti said he considers his role an important one since, as foreigners in Italy, the students need someone to look up to and give them practical advice. “To teach,” he says, “is not just a job, it's a kind of mission.”

Attending class at the *Centro di Cultura per Stranieri* is so essential because what we learn cannot be taught solely by workbooks and exercises, but rather through the interaction with our professors and fellow students. This exchange of ideas is a key component of our experience at the *Centro*, and something which can only truly be achieved at an international university. Interacting with people from all over the world has afforded us some genuinely memorable experiences. For example, Dan (one of the authors) and his classmate Chika (a Japanese woman in her 30's), once had a very thorough discussion on 1960's rock & roll. That is, Chika once schooled him in the ways of rock & roll from 1968-1972. Everything in her musical vocabulary was light-years ahead of his fondness for The Beatles and The Rolling Stones. Dan further recalls a dinner comprised of vegetarian Mexican food with a German and Scottish-Swede. How many people can say they have done that?

What we are taking away from these particular experiences at the *Centro* is a greater apprecia-

tion for the power of culture. Culture is an incredibly compelling force that everyone seems to acknowledge but no one seems to address. Does it stem from a well of common experiences? It can't be, as Italians can name every member of the Addams Family. Does it stem from a common native language? We don't think so—as Dan grew up speaking Russian but considers himself 100% American, and Candace and Britt are both Italian-American, but didn't speak any Italian before last year. However you define it, culture can be problematic when used as a wedge to divide groups of people. But when we instead appreciate those cultural differences, and use it to make connections with others, it becomes an invaluable learning tool. Every day at the *Villa La Quiete*, we and over a hundred other students try and achieve this ideal as we talk, listen, learn, and sip our cups of *cappuccino al cioccolato*.

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packed bus. Just a few more stops to go. The *panetteria* is on my left, the *pizzeria* on the right, displaying their freshly steaming creations for the day. A *parrucchiere* trims the hair of a single client next door. The stop is up ahead. As I gather my bag and climb off the bus, I am just one of a few other patrons weary after the long ride across town. I throw my backpack over my shoulder and begin thinking about my daily journey. We all go about our schedules everyday, off to work or school, but it is the slight quirks, fur coats and scooters, which make us unique and gives us the motivation, every morning, to climb onto that crowded bus.

A Carnevale with Wild Things

Karen Wardzala
Student Services



The Florence 2005
Carnevale parade in full
swing. Photos: Francesco
Guazzelli



The **VILLAROSSA VOICE** is the newsletter for the Syracuse University in Florence community. We welcome your news, questions, comments, articles and/or artwork. All students, faculty and staff are encouraged to participate.

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On February 6, 2005 a group of Syracuse University students, staff and faculty members participated in the 3rd edition of the *carnevale* parade in Florence. The event, “*Carnevale Nel Mondo*,” is organized annually by the city’s office for Florentine Traditions and International Relations and celebrates the international communities present in Florence. Syracuse, representing the United States of America, was one of the 26 different communities to participate in this year’s parade. Student organizers Kathryn Letts, Heather Knapp, Gineyda Diaz and Dan Belenky helped create costumes and organize participants. Our theme was “Where the Wild Things Are” and we were able to utilize the beautiful costumes created for January’s performance of the children’s opera based on this childhood favorite. A special thanks to all those involved!

