

LA VOCE



ITALIAN CANADIAN CULTURAL
ASSOCIATION OF NOVA SCOTIA

The Community Voice of Italian Canadians in Nova Scotia and Beyond



President's Message

Greetings!

It has been an amazing year for us at the Italian Canadian Association of Nova Scotia with so many wonderful moments spent together celebrating Italian culture.

All year your ICCA-NS Board and committee volunteers host a variety of events. From member- only events, to Sunday Dinners, special fundraising events, artisan craft shows, our language and cooking schools, the Festa Italiana and facility rentals - so much must be done to secure the future of our ICCA.

It has been a privilege to be president for almost three years now working alongside an amazingly invested Board of Directors.

Many of us have grown up in the Club and we are so lucky to have others who have joined us with nothing but passion to keep our ICCA NS thriving.

Our membership has more than doubled and we are always looking to engage our members in helping wherever they can.

Being a not-for-profit organization and solely volunteer driven, we need your help. As president I have tried to meet each and every one of you.

For anyone I have not yet met, I very much look forward to doing so at one of our various events.

After almost three years of rebuilding many aspects of our Club and fortifying others that were outdated, now is the time to turn our focus to the continuation of our Club well into the future.

Now is the time when we are looking to grow our committees so that the work that is needed to be done gets shared amongst many. We have the following committees: ICCA events, rentals, Sunday Dinner, grants, marketing and communications, facilities, kitchen, bar, language and cooking schools, and strategic planning.

If you have any special skills in these fields or have a willingness to just be available to help and enjoy time with some pretty amazing people, we need YOU.

This year marks the ICCA-NS's 50th year! Let us come together to celebrate all that we have accomplished over half a century.

For now, I wish you and yours only the very best!

Sandra Gardin

President, ICCA-NS

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Messaggio del Presidente - Italiano

Saluti!

È sempre sorprendente quanto velocemente ci ritroviamo a dicembre. È stato un anno straordinario per noi dell'Associazione Italo-Canadese della Nuova Scozia, pieno di momenti meravigliosi trascorsi insieme a celebrare la cultura italiana.

Durante tutto l'anno, il Consiglio Direttivo e i volontari dei comitati dell'ICCA-NS hanno organizzato una varietà di eventi: dagli eventi riservati ai soci alle Domeniche Italiane, dagli eventi speciali di raccolta fondi alle fiere artigianali, fino alle nostre scuole di lingua e cucina, alla Festa Italiana e agli affitti delle sale. C'è davvero tanto lavoro da fare per garantire il futuro della nostra Associazione.

È stato un privilegio essere presidente per quasi tre anni, collaborando con un Consiglio Direttivo straordinariamente impegnato. Molti di noi sono cresciuti nel Club e siamo fortunati ad avere altri che si sono uniti a noi con la sola passione di mantenere viva la nostra ICCA-NS.

Il numero dei nostri soci è più che raddoppiato e cerchiamo sempre di coinvolgere tutti nell'aiuto, ovunque possibile. Essendo un'organizzazione senza scopo di lucro e gestita esclusivamente da volontari, abbiamo bisogno del vostro sostegno.

Come presidente, ho cercato di incontrare ciascuno di voi. Per chi non ho ancora avuto il piacere di conoscere, spero davvero di farlo presto, in occasione di uno dei nostri prossimi eventi.

Dopo quasi tre anni di ricostruzione di molti aspetti del nostro Club e di rafforzamento di altri ormai superati, è giunto il momento di concentrarci sulla continuità del Club nel lungo termine.

Ora è il momento di far crescere i nostri comitati, così che il lavoro necessario possa essere condiviso tra più persone. I comitati attuali sono: eventi ICCA, affitti, Domeniche Italiane, sovvenzioni, marketing e comunicazione, strutture, cucina, bar, scuole di lingua e cucina e pianificazione strategica.

Se avete competenze specifiche in uno di questi ambiti o semplicemente la disponibilità e la voglia di aiutare e trascorrere del tempo con persone straordinarie, abbiamo bisogno di VOI.

Quest'anno segnerà il 50° anniversario della nostra ICCA-NS! Riuniamoci per celebrare tutto ciò che abbiamo realizzato in mezzo secolo.

Per ora, auguro a voi e alle vostre famiglie il meglio!



Sandra Gardin
Presidente - President
ICCA-NS (2023 - present)

Sandra Gardin

A Message from Marilisa Benigno, Honorary Consul of Italy for the Maritimes



Congratulations to the ICCA on the occasion of its 50th anniversary!

This is a significant milestone for our Italian community and a testament to the hard work of all past and present volunteers of the ICCA. I look forward to seeing many of you at the AGM on March 8 and to visiting again in April to assist members with the signing of pension proof-of-life forms. As always I am here to assist with any and all consular matters. Grazie e a presto!

Thank you, Marilisa Benigno

Marilisa Benigno
Honorary Consul of Italy
for the Maritime Provinces

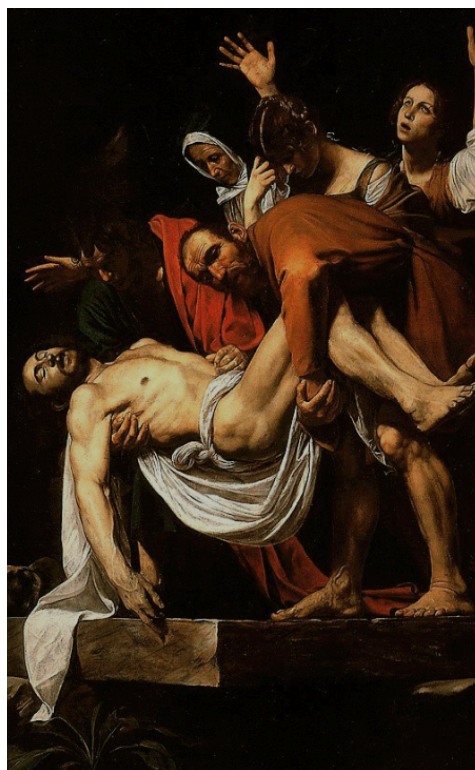
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Caravaggio: naturalismo su tela

Di: Gloria Pugliese

Michelangelo Merisi detto **Caravaggio**, nasce a Milano nel 1571 da una famiglia originaria di Caravaggio, un villaggio della campagna bergamasca. La prima formazione del giovane artista è legata soprattutto all'ambiente lombardo, ma sono evidenti anche influenze venete, alle quali è in parte debitore della particolare sensibilità per le luci e le ombre che diventerà uno dei temi inconfondibili della sua pittura. Dai pittori lombardi apprende invece l'attenzione per la realtà quotidiana e per una religiosità semplice. Sotto un'imponente influenza naturalista, Caravaggio rinnoverà radicalmente la pittura cinquecentesca.

Grazie ad una ricca committanza religiosa e borghese che richiama artisti da tutta Italia, tra il XVI and il XVII secolo Roma vive una stagione artistica così intensa da essere definita *Secondo Rinascimento*. In questo periodo si sviluppano due principali linee artistiche ispirate ai principi di chiarezza e semplicità: la linea naturalista e la linea classicista. E' proprio a Roma che Caravaggio sviluppa il suo linguaggio naturalistico, studiando i grandi maestri del Cinquecento e le opere dell'antichità classica. Nel 1592, subito dopo il suo trasferimento, stringe rapporti con il *Cavalier d'Arpino*; presso la sua bottega egli si distingue subito per la straordinaria disinvoltura con cui dipinge scene *di genere*, con personaggi impegnati in normali attività quotidiane, e *nature morte*, composizioni con soggetti inanimati, tipicamente fiori e frutta.



Deposizione nel Sepolcro, Caravaggio, circa 1602

Nel 1595 la vita dell'artista subisce una svolta: grazie al suo eccezionale talento, infatti, si guadagna le grazie del *cardinale Del Monte*, ambasciatore del Granduca di Toscana a Roma, un colto e raffinato collezionista d'arte. Caravaggio ottiene anche la prima importante commissione pubblica: dipinge tre grandi tele ad olio che illustrano la vita di San Matteo, per la **Cappella Contarelli**. I personaggi sono figure immerse nel buio illustrate nella loro quotidianità, e gli episodi sono intrisi di sacralità grazie ai lampi di luce che li investono. Nella **Deposizione nel Sepolcro** il contrasto luce-ombra è intenso e drammatico, ed il realismo che attraversa l'intera scena è eclatante nella pesantezza di un corpo morto, pallido e dalle labbra blastre. I personaggi hanno le sembianze di contadini umili, a piedi nudi e con volti segnati dalle rughe e dal dolore. La scena è intima ed esprime un dolore umano, terreno.

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Caravaggio: naturalism on canvas

By: Gloria Pugliese

Michelangelo Merisi, known as **Caravaggio**, was born in Milan in 1571 to a family from Caravaggio, a village near Bergamo. The young artist's early training was primarily linked to Lombardy, but Venetian influences are in part responsible for his sensible eye to light and shadows, which would become one of the unmistakable themes of his art. From Lombard painters, instead, he learned how to depict religious scenes like everyday reality. Under the powerful influence of naturalism, Caravaggio will go on to revolutionize art in '1500.

Thanks to a rich religious and bourgeois patronage that attracted artists from all over Italy, Rome sees an artistically intense period in between the 16th and 17th centuries that has been described as the *Second Renaissance*. Here two main artistic trends developed: the naturalist and the classicist styles, inspired by clarity and simplicity.

It was in Rome indeed that Caravaggio developed his naturalistic language, studying the great masters of the 16th century and the works of the classic era. In 1592 immediately after his move he established a work relationship with *Cavalier d'Arpino*; in his workshop he stood out for the extraordinary ease in painting *genre scenes*, with characters engaged in ordinary everyday activities and *still lifes*, compositions with inanimate subjects, typically flowers and fruit.

In 1595 the artist's life took a turn for the better: thanks to his exceptional talent he earned the favor of *Cardinal Del Monte*, ambassador of the Grand Duke of Tuscany in Rome, a cultured and refined art collector. Caravaggio also received his first major public commission: three large oil paintings depicting the life of Saint Matthew, for the **Contarelli Chapel**. The figures are depicted in their everyday lives, immersed in darkness, and the episodes are imbued with sacredness through the flashes of light that bathe them. In the **Deposition in the Sepulchre**, the contrast of light and shadow is intense and dramatic, and realism is striking in the pale, heavy dead body with bluish lips. The figures resemble humble barefoot peasants, with faces marked by wrinkles and pain. An intimate scene depicting human, earthly pain.

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Caravaggio: naturalismo su tela

Giovane violento ed irrequieto, a causa del suo carattere fiero e ribelle Caravaggio finisce continuamente coinvolto in risse ed affari loschi, tanto che nel 1606, durante un litigio particolarmente violento rimane ferito ed arriva addirittura ad uccidere uno degli avversari. Condannato a morte, inizia la sua avventurosa e tragica fuga da Roma, che lo porta prima a Napoli e poi subito a Malta, dove lavora per i *Cavalieri dell'Ordine* e produce la **Decollazione del Battista**: per strada, di fronte ad una prigione, il boia è chinato sulla vittima a cui ha appena serrato la gola; il sangue sul selciato, la disposizione dei personaggi e la scarsa luce accentuano la drammaticità della scena. Nel **Bacco**, il pittore raffigura il dio del vino con le sembianze di un amico, che gli si presta spesso come modello. In questa opera, Caravaggio mostra la realtà esattamente come si presenta: un giovane ubriaco e con le unghie sporche. **La Canestra di Frutta** poi, è una delle prime nature morte della pittura italiana – e di nuovo incarna perfettamente il naturalismo del Caravaggio: frutta marcia e foglie secche come richiamo alla precarietà della vita.

Nel 1609 Caravaggio torna a Napoli, ove è ferito in un agguato; la sua tappa finale sarà Porto Ercole, nella Maremma toscana, dove nel 1610 morirà – solo e disperato, stroncato dalla malaria e dagli strapazzi.

Caravaggio: naturalism on canvas

Violent and restless, Caravaggio's proud and rebellious nature continually embroiled him in brawls and shady affairs, so much so that in 1606 he gets injured during a particularly heated argument and kills one of his opponents. Sentenced to death, he embarks in a perilous and tragic escape from Rome which takes him to Naples and then immediately to Malta. Here he produced **The Beheading of John the Baptist** for the *Knights of the Order*: right outside of a prison the executioner is leaning over the victim with a clamped throat; the blood, the arrangement of characters and the dim light accentuate the drama. In **Bacchus**, the painter depicts the god of wine in the guise of a friend, who often serves as his model. In this work Caravaggio shows reality exactly as it appears: a drunken young man with dirty fingernails. The **Basket of Fruit** is one of the first Italian still lifes, and once again it perfectly embodies Caravaggio's naturalism: rotten fruit and dry leaves evoke the precariousness of life.

In 1609 Caravaggio ultimately returned to Naples, but was wounded in an ambush. His final stop was Porto Ercole, in the Tuscan Maremma, where he died in 1610 — alone and desperate, struck down by malaria and fatigue.



Il Bacco, Caravaggio, 1598



La Canestra di Frutta, Caravaggio, circa 1597

BURSARY for 2026

The Board of Directors is pleased to announce we will be offering an ICCA-NS Bursary this year.

Details and how to apply are on our website.
www.iccans.org/bursary
Highlights are below.

Deadline: May 31, 2026

Eligibility Basics: Youth who are current members of the ICCA, entering or enrolled in post-secondary in September 2026 and are of Italian descent (parent or grandparent). Full requirements are on the website.

Submission requirements include a creative component on your heritage and also the ICCA and Youth engagement.

Cooking School News

The ICCA Cooking School continues to grow with many classes selling out within days of opening registration.

Hands-on favourites like gnocchi and handmade filled pasta always fill quickly, and desserts like tiramisu remain a crowd pleaser. Our seafood-focused evenings have also brought fresh energy and excitement to the teaching kitchen. Guests love learning authentic techniques they can bring home to their own tables.

We have now completed multiple rounds of classes, and interest continues to build with each new release. If you want first access before classes are announced publicly, be sure you are on our email list.

A heartfelt thank you to our incredible chefs – Veronica, Riccardo, Roberto, Brandi, Massimiliano, Diego, Sophia, Bonnie, Terri Lynn, and Sabrina – and to the many volunteers who support each session. Your passion and generosity make this program such a success.

~ Jeff Pike, Cooking School Director

Upcoming Events

February Sunday Dinner - March 29th

April Sunday Dinner - April 22nd

Festa della Repubblica - June 2, 2026

Everyone is welcome to our events, however, some are for members only (indicated by a *)

Join our e-news list to be among the first to know when tickets are on sale. www.iccans.org/news

Join here: www.iccans.org/membership



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EXILE

excerpts from an original story

By: Mariolina Koller-Fanconi

Exile, a word that causes anxiety, almost fear. According to the Webster's Desk Dictionary, exile is a prolonged separation from one's country, usually by force. But there are several kinds of exile, not all by force.

I learned the first time about exile when I was taught at school the history of the Greeks and the Romans. Some Greek philosophers had been sent into exile to Sicily. At the time Sicily was a Greek colony, I seem to remember. Not so bad, I thought, it could have been much worse. But still, they lost their families and their friends, although in my childish mind, I couldn't imagine philosophers, strange men walking around dishevelled, living in normal homes with wives and babies. How did a philosopher earn his life? Writing about difficult matters nobody understood? Holding lectures like a professor? Discussing about politics and making enemies? Anyway, in Sicily some apparently became famous. Maybe they needed the solitude offered by exile, while the perfume of blooming almond trees inspired them.

Today, when I hear the word I think automatically of Napoleon exiled at St. Helena, a faraway island in the middle of the South Atlantic Ocean. It was already his second exile, but the first time, when his British enemies banned him to the island of Elba, near to his Corsica, after 100 days he succeeded to escape. A short exile, almost a relaxing holiday from his demanding duties, but long enough for today's aficionados who enjoy visiting the Elba's villa – rather a simple house – inhabited by the French emperor. With St. Helena it was different. All at once, he had to survive surrounded by a foreign ocean, on an island that was almost deserted. I see him in my mind going out for a walk and meeting no soul. Not a pleasant feeling, but of course still better than being in a prison. Dragging himself on the rough path around his dwelling, he follows with his eyes the flight of chirping birds, free birds, what are they called? He notices the little yellow flowers blossoming along the road, flowers that don't need much sun. Did somebody plant them or are they wild? He counts the clouds that sweep through the open sky, pushed by the wind that never wants to stop, and admires their changing shapes. They chase each other like he chased his enemies, but never really take the others over. He too didn't succeed, fate was against him, or was it his own failing? He remembers events deeply hidden in the folds of his aging brain, the loves of his life. He isn't really old, but although he doesn't admit it, he feels that his life worth living is finished; as far as he is concerned, he could be hundred instead of only fifty or so. Does he have at least a dog to whom give orders in French? I doubt it. How does he spend the day, maybe jotting down future plans on how to beat his enemies? Does he paint? In his half angry and half depressed mood, he could create wonderful artwork. But he is able to create only mental designs, nothing with oil paint or watercolours. So he tries to find solace in the food and in the wine. It's a mistake, a big mistake. The wine of local grapes is sour. And maybe he drinks too much coffee. As we all know, he got stomach cancer and then died. No, he probably hadn't been poisoned, his body simply refused to keep him alive. Good for the British, who now had one less worry, good for the French, who were fed up with his previous extravaganzas and didn't realize that in this world extravaganzas never end.

Other emperors and empresses, kings and queens arose, not all were sent to exile. One, the British Victoria, was very much loved and admired, so she died in her own bed of old age. A few were murdered, but others tasted again exile. The old Italian Vittorio Emanuele for instance, who "handed over" the reign to his son Umberto before finishing his days in the Egyptian exile. Taken care of by his warm-hearted wife Elena of Montenegro he probably appreciated leaving a duty he never had longed for, and devoting time to his precious coins collection. And poor Umberto himself, not emperor but only "king of May", found exile in Portugal. His was a very lonely exile, since his wife, the Belgian princess Marie José, preferred Geneva. Not even the delicious Portuguese cuisine could induce her to spend a few more hours in the company of a husband she had seldom appreciated. Who knows, maybe it was the best solution for both: separate exile instead of divorce.

Exile in Siberia... simply horrible for the poor creatures exiled by the Tsar and later by Stalin, maybe forced to work in unbearable conditions. Therefore, when we learn that Thomas Mann, the famous German author, chose California as exile to avoid the Nazis, we only smile because he could live in wealth and honour in an idyllic spot – and still complained. How many others envied him. Stephan Zweig, for instance – the wonderful Jewish Austrian writer finished his days in 1942 in Brazil, having lost all hope in a bright future. He neither had the financial means nor the thick skin of Thomas Mann. He was a victim of exile that often kills the soul before the body.

I have personally known a few people who went to exile. A friend of my uncle, a dentist, managed to leave Italy for Argentina during the Nazi occupation. He had a Jewish surname, enough to put his life in danger. In Buenos Aires he quietly waited for the end of WWII and returned then home as soon as he could. Another Jew, a German acquaintance of my father, found refuge in Rio de Janeiro shortly before the war, just in time to save himself. After the war he never went back to Germany as his family's business didn't exist anymore and he refused to move to Israel. In his heart he was European. Then, when he was almost 100, he died alone in a hotel in Portugal. Exile can cancel one's identity.

We humans have the potential to be bad and to be good, it all depends on circumstances, society, education and love we received or missed during childhood. Because of our weakness, dictatorships will unfortunately always exist. Therefore, so will exile. Some aspects of mental illnesses are probably a form of unconscious exile. Our brain gives us the possibility to live in a world different from the one that surrounds us. A blessing and a danger.

Our ICCA Italian Language Journey ICCA Language School: la nostra esperienza

by: Paul Pugliese Shreenan and Anne Camozzi

We are both retired professionals and although half Italian, we never learned Italian at home. Before ICCA classes, we had never met. Paul lives in Halifax and Anne in Antigonish. Neither of us had spoken Italian except for the occasional ciao, but had studied individually somewhat. We were both strongly motivated to become fluent speakers. Paul is moving to Calabria with his partner, and Anne is fulfilling a promise made to her father.

The ICCA Italian Language School classes with Novella (Novi) Nicchitta were a revelation and introduced us to the basics. We realized our challenge was huge and thought we would never grasp concepts like pronomi combinati. To review classes and because we felt about the same level, we began studying together about an hour a week.

In spring, we faced a six-month wait for Fall classes. We did not want to lose our progress so we met daily on Zoom, designed a study program and practiced speaking.

We reviewed grammar rules from classes and tried to use them talking and writing sentences, while correcting each other as best we could.

We created quizzes using Chat GPT. Sometimes we watched the same YouTube videos and discussed them. Our real breakthrough came when we watched polyglot Steve Kaufmann speak about his secrets to learning a new language, which led us to purchasing his app, LingQ. We practice writing with LingQ's AI Lynx, programmed to chat in writing with you about things you study in the app.

From our first faltering days of trying to say one phrase in Italian, we are thrilled we are now conversational and often think in Italian.

We make many, many mistakes, but we learned that speaking, listening, and learning daily is more important than speaking perfectly. We improved our skills through many hours listening, reading, speaking, writing and laughing. Having mutual interests to discuss helped our learning and we also both had time to make Italian a daily habit. We learned the true meaning of impegno! The first time we both could say chiacchieriamo, we cheered many bravos and bravas!

This August we met in person for the first time. After almost five months of speaking everyday, while screen sharing vocabulary and rules, it was great to hang out! In three days we went out for dinner, we went to swim and we had an Italian picnic at the Public Gardens. We were very happy to meet Novi to show her our progress and show our gratitude.

We hope to perhaps meet some of you in our next ICCA class! We'd love to expand our chat group. Many thanks to ICCA's Italian Language School (Federica Belluccini, Director) and especially Novi, for starting us on our journey, and to the La Voce for allowing us to share our Italian language journey. Our main advice to anyone trying to learn this beautiful language - don't wait until your Italian is grammatically correct to try speaking and keep it fun!

di: Paul Pugliese Sheernan and Anne Camozzi

Siamo entrambi professionisti in pensione, e nonostante italiani per metà, non parlavamo mai italiano a casa da giovani. Prima dei corsi dell'ICCA, non ci eravamo mai incontrati. Paolo abita a Halifax ed Anna a Antigonish. Non lo parlavamo se non per uno sporadico 'ciao', ma avevamo studiato un po' individualmente. Eravamo entrambi motivati a diventare fluenti: presto Paolo si trasferirà in Calabria con la sua compagna, mentre Anna onora una promessa fatta a suo padre.

I corsi d'italiano dell'ICCA con Novella (Novi) Nicchitta sono stati una rivelazione e ci hanno introdotto all'italiano di base. La sfida era enorme e pensavamo che non avremmo mai compreso concetti come i pronomi combinati. Per rivedere le lezioni, iniziammo a studiare insieme circa un'ora a settimana. Avremmo dovuto aspettare mesi per il corso successivo.

Non volevamo perdere i progressi, quindi ci incontravamo quotidianamente su Zoom per progettare un programma di studio ed esercitarci a parlare. Ripassavamo le regole grammaticali delle lezioni e provavamo a usarle mentre parlavamo e scrivevamo, apportando correzioni l'uno per l'altro. Creavamo dei quiz con ChatGPT. A volte guardavamo un video su YouTube e avevamo discussioni interessanti... e divertenti. Il vero progresso è arrivato quando abbiamo scoperto il poliglotta Steve Kaufman con il suo segreto per imparare una nuova lingua, ed acquistato la sua app, LingQ. Ci esercitavamo a scrivere con AI Lynx.



Novella Nicchitta, Paul Pugliese Shreenan, Anne Camozzi

Da quei primi giorni di esitazione, adesso siamo entusiasti di poter colloquiare e spesso pensare in italiano. Facciamo una marea di errori, ma abbiamo imparato che conversare, ascoltare, e studiare quotidianamente è più importante che parlare perfettamente. Abbiamo migliorato le nostre competenze spendendo molte ore ad ascoltare, leggere, scrivere e ridere. Avere interessi in comune aiuta l'apprendimento e entrambi abbiamo reso lo studio un'abitudine quotidiana. Abbiamo imparato il significato vero di impegno! E la prima volta che siamo riusciti a dire chiacchieriamo, abbiamo festeggiato!

In agosto ci siamo incontrati per la prima volta, dopo quasi cinque mesi spesi a parlare ogni giorno, condividendo vocabolari e regole su uno schermo - è stato fantastico. In tre giorni abbiamo cenato insieme, siamo andati nuotare e abbiamo fatto un picnic ai giardini pubblici. Siamo stati contenti di incontrare Novi per dimostrarle il nostro progresso e la nostra gratitudine.

Speriamo di incontrarvi al prossimo corso, ci farebbe piacere espandere il nostro gruppo di conversazione. Moltissime grazie alla scuola di lingua dell'ICCA, alla direttrice Federica Belluccini e soprattutto a Novi per averci guidato nel nostro percorso - e a La Voce per averci permesso di condividerlo. Il nostro consiglio a chi cerca di imparare questa bella lingua: non aspettare che il tuo italiano sia corretto grammaticalmente per parlarlo, e soprattutto divertiti!

La Calabria

Source: Wikipedia

Located in Southern Italy, *Calabria* is known for its striking coastlines, mountainous landscapes and deep-rooted traditions. It is home to breathtaking views of the Tyrrhenian and Ionian Seas, with dramatic cliffs, golden beaches and crystal clear waters. Bordered by the region Basilicata to the north, it is separated from Sicily by the Strait of Messina. Inhabited since the Paleolithic, Calabria has one of the oldest records of human presence in Italy, which date back to around 700,000 BC when *Homo erectus* evolved leaving traces around coastal areas. Stone Age humans created the "Bos Primigenius", a figure of a bull on a cliff which dates back around 12,000 years in the Romito Cave in the town of Papasidero. When the Neolithic period came the first villages were founded around 3,500 BC. Thanks to its strategic location at the center of the Mediterranean, *Calabria* has seen the flourishing of numerous cultures. The Greek period represents an era of great splendor for this region, with the founding of numerous cities that for centuries would be among the richest and culturally prominent of their time – being home of key figures in history such as Pythagoras, Herodotus and Milo.



Calabria is the birthplace of the name of Italy, given by the Ancient Greeks who settled in this land starting from the 8th century BC and made it the heart of *Magna Graecia*. Originally the Greeks used *Italoï* to indicate the native population of modern *Calabria*, which according to some ancient Greek writers was derived from a legendary king of the Oenotri, Italus. The name *Calabria* instead appears to derive from a pre-Roman root meaning "rock" or "limestone". Another hypothesis suggests that the term derives from the Ancient Greek *kalón-bryōn* ([earth] that gives rise to good/beauty), indicating the fertility of its land.

In Roman times, it was part of the *Regio III Lucania et Bruttii*. After the Gothic War, it became and remained for five centuries a Byzantine dominion, fully recovering its Greek character. Cenobitism flourished, with the rise throughout the peninsula of numerous churches, hermitages and monasteries in which Basilian monks were dedicated to transcription. The Byzantines introduced the art of silk in *Calabria* and made it the main silk production area in Europe. With such a rich history, Calabria is dotted with ancient villages, castles and archaeological parks.

In *Calabria* there are three historical ethnolinguistic minorities: the *Grecanici*, speaking Calabrian Greek, the *Arbëreshë* people, and the *Occitans* of Guardia Piemontese. This extraordinary linguistic diversity makes the region an object of study for linguists from all over the world.

Three natural parks are found in the region, with the Pollino National Park being the largest in Italy.

Calabria is agriculturally rich, with the Italy's second highest number of organic farmers after Sicily. The red onion of Tropea is cultivated during summer period on the Tyrrhenian coast of central *Calabria*, and has been awarded with the protected geographical indication. So have the excellent olive oil varieties, from olive tree cultivations extensively spread throughout the region. Calabria produces about a quarter of Italy's citrus fruit, with chinotto, bergamotto and citron being hybrids found exclusively in the area. Calabria is the largest producer of porcini mushrooms in Italy, thanks to the heavily wooded forests of its mountains ranges. The region also boasts a very ancient tradition in the cultivation and production of liquorice, holding eighty percent of the national production.

The poet Gabriele D'Annunzio called the coast facing Sicily near Reggio Calabria "the most beautiful kilometer in Italy". In addition to the typical tourist destinations, the interior of *Calabria* is rich in history, traditions, art and culture. Medieval castles, towers, churches, monasteries and other French castles and structures from the Norman to the Aragonese periods are common elements in both the interior and coastline of *Calabria*. Some prominent destinations include:

- Reggio Calabria is on the strait between the mainland and Sicily, the largest and oldest city in Calabria dating from the 8th century BC, known for its panoramic seaside with botanical gardens between the art nouveau buildings and the beaches, and its 3,000 years of history with its Aragonese Castle and the Museo Nazionale della Magna Grecia where the Riace bronzes (Bronzi di Riace) are located.
- Scilla, on the Tyrrhenian Sea, pearl of the "Violet Coast", has a delightful panorama and is the site of some of Homer's tales.
- Gerace is a medieval city with a Norman Castle and Norman Cathedral.
- Squillace, a seaside resort and important archaeological site. Nearby is the birthplace of Cassiodorus.

- Isola Capo Rizzuto with its magnificent sea-surrounded fortress.
- Cosenza, birthplace of scientist and philosopher Bernardino Telesio and seat of the Cosentian Academy, known for its cultural institutions, the old quarter, a Hohenstaufen Castle, an open-air museum and an 11th-century Romanesque-Gothic Cathedral. In 2011 the Cathedral of Cosenza received UNESCO World Heritage status for being "Heritage Witness to a Culture of Peace". This is the first award given by UNESCO to the region of Calabria.



Tropea, on the Tyrrhenian Sea coast, is home to a dramatic seaside beach, and the Santa Maria dell'Isola sanctuary. It is also renowned for its sweet red onions.

- Stilo, the birthplace of philosopher Tommaso Campanella, with its Norman Castle and Byzantine church, the Cattolica.
- Pizzo Calabro, on the Tyrrhenian Sea coast, known for its ice cream called "Tartufo". Interesting places in Pizzo are Piazza Repubblica and the Aragonese castle where Murat was shot.
- Paola, a town situated on the Tyrrhenian Sea coast, renowned for being the birthplace of St. Francis of Paola, patron saint of Calabria and Italian sailors, and for the old Franciscan sanctuary built during the last hundred years of the Middle Ages by the will of St. Francis.



- San Nicola Arcella with its breathtaking Arco Magno grotto.
- Sibari, on the Ionian coast, a village situated near the archaeological site of the ancient city of Sybaris, a Greek colony of the 8th century BC.
- Spilinga is known for its spicy pork pâté, 'Nduja.
- Palmi is famous for its beautiful beaches and the ancient Saracen Watchtowers. Here the religious celebration named Varia takes place – in honor of Our Lady of the Sacred Letter, patron saint and protector of the city. The event takes place every four years and is attended by hundreds of thousands of people. Varia is part of the Italian Network of Large Shoulder-Carried Machines, and it has earned the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity denomination in 2013. The term Varia refers to an enormous sacred chariot representing the universe and the Assumption of the Virgin Mary into heaven, with human figures representing Mary, the Heavenly Father, the Apostles, and angels. The chariot, approximately 16m high, is carried by 200 'Mbuttaturi (bearers).

ICCA-NS - Board of Directors

The Annual General meeting was held on March 8, 2026 and we are looking for new talent to join our committees. If you are interested, please reach out to Secretary, Kathy Colaiacovo and she will share details.

Language School News

We were very pleased to take part in the ICCA Members and Language School Christmas Party and the children enjoyed sharing their musical talents too!

The Winter 2026 term is now underway, with children's classes beginning February 7 and adult online classes starting the week of January 26.

The 10-week session runs through mid-April. We are pleased to share that 31 children and youth students and approximately 80 adult students are enrolled this term.

A new partnership with Saint Mary's University is now in place to support our early childhood program, with two SMU-funded volunteers assisting in the younger classrooms.

We do need some more instructors, if you are interested, please reach out to me at director@iccans.org

~ Federica Belluccini, Italian School Director

2026 ICCA-NS Board of Directors

President: Sandra Gardin
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SAVE THE DATE!

Sunday Dinner - March 29th
 Sunday Dinner - April 26th
 50th ICCA Celebration - May 9th
 Festa Della Repubblica - June 2nd
 Festa Italiana Halifax - Sept 11-12

Send us your Milestones and Memories to include in the next issue of La Voce.

Visit our website page www.iccans.org/LAVoce to get details on how to send in your information to include in future issues of La Voce.



Adesso
 Project Management Inc.

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