

FRIENDS of ITALY
SOCIETY of HAWAII
SINCE 1990

IL GAZZETTINO

Upcoming Events

RSVP on our [website](#); follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)!

Seeing Clearly: What if Stars Twinkle Too Much?

29 April 6-7pm

Online

Annual Meeting

4 May 5:30-6:30pm

Online

Italian Language: Levels 1 and 2

11 May-29 June

Online

A Taste of Sicily II: Tasting Menu with Wine Pairing

15 May 5:30-7:30pm

Taormina Sicilian Cuisine

Paths to Italian Citizenship

20 May 6-7pm

Online

Resources:

Mayor Blangiardi's [interview](#) with us

Il Ricettario (Cookbook): Celebrating 30 years

[Free PDF](#) (for members only)

[Hard-copy and Kindle for purchase](#) (for all)



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In The Spotlight

Maarit Tiirikainen



Maarit joined the Friends of Italy Society in late 2020 and started taking the Italian classes in January 2021 with two of her dear friends and singing buddies, Joyce Cranmer and Beth Flint (also fresh members of the Society). She has always been passionate about studying foreign languages, and by the end of high school, she had learned English, Swedish, German, and French on top of her native language Finnish, considered one of the hardest languages to learn (well, she does not think so...). Anyhow, after the beginner's class with Chiara Logli, she decided to take the intermediate right away with Daniela Minerbi, also partly because she would normally have a scheduling conflict on Tuesday nights, having live rehearsals with the Windward Choral Society where she sings in the soprano section. She has really enjoyed the Italian classes on Tuesday nights and they have been a lot of fun although really quite challenging sometimes. She's looking forward to attending the events that the Society offers when we can once again go "live"! Maarit was born in Lahti, Finland, and has been an avid choral singer since an early age.

Maarit started her musical education at the age of 6 and studied piano for 4 years in the Lahti Music Conservatory, Finland. After being admitted to the Lotila School at the age of 11, she found her true calling as a singer. Lotila and the higher grade Tiirismaa schools emphasize daily music education for children ages 9-18 based on the Kodály method. The 1982 tour of the school's advanced choir Chorus Scholae Lahti brought her for the first time to the USA for a short visit. After joining University of Helsinki for Masters and PhD level education in Biochemistry, Maarit sang with various Helsinki choirs, including the University Oratorio Choir (Akateeminen Laulu) that served the two main symphony orchestras of Helsinki. Post-Doctoral training brought Maarit to UC San Francisco in 1995 and she joined the Coro Hispano de San Francisco, led by the renowned scholar of early Latin American sacred music, Juan Pedro Gaffney R. During the next 9 years, Maarit sang and recorded with Coro (and learned some Spanish), occasionally doing small solo and double quartet parts and also performing in other local music productions of the Spanish-speaking community. Maarit relocated to Oahu in 2005, and started singing with Honolulu Chorale in spring 2006. In 2007, she joined the Symphony Chorus (Oahu Choral Society), in 2011 the Windward Choral Society, and enjoys singing occasionally with the Central Union Church Oratorio Choir and the Hawai'i Masterworks Choir. Maarit loves traveling as well. Unfortunately, the Italian tour planned for summer 2020 and again for 2021 has been postponed, but she hopes to be able to do it with the Hawai'i Masterworks Choir in summer 2022 so that she can put her newest foreign language, Italian, to the test! Maarit joined the Hawai'i Opera Theatre Choir in 2018 and was cast into two of the HOT opera productions that year (sung in Russian and French). She is looking forward to doing her first Italian opera in the future, while learning more about opera performance as an Associate Member in the HOT Orvis Opera Studio. She is incredibly grateful to her voice teacher and coach, Dr. Maya Hoover. As for her daytime work, Maarit directs a Genomics Laboratory at the University of Hawaii Cancer Center (as an Associate Specialist) and enjoys doing hula at the YWCA when not doing science or singing.

In the Spotlight



MIGNON

Kennst du das Land, wo die Zitronen blühn . . . ?

You know that land, her lemon groves in bloom?
Dark foliage of the orange, gold in gloom?
So soft a blowing air, so blue a sky
Over the myrtle hushed, the laurel high?
You know that land perhaps? Oh that's the way
I'd go with you, my dearest—off today!

You know that house, how tall the pillars stand?
The halls all glossy, and the chambers grand?
The marble shapes that eye me, where I go:
“What's the world done, poor child, to hurt you so?”
You know that house perhaps? Oh that's the way
I'd go with you, my guardian—off today!

You know that mountain and its cloudy track?
The drifting haze, the mule-clop echoing back?
—Old dragons and their brood in grottoes sprawl;
Each rock's a cliff; each brook, a waterfall.
You know the place perhaps? Oh that's the way
Our journey urges! Father, off today!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

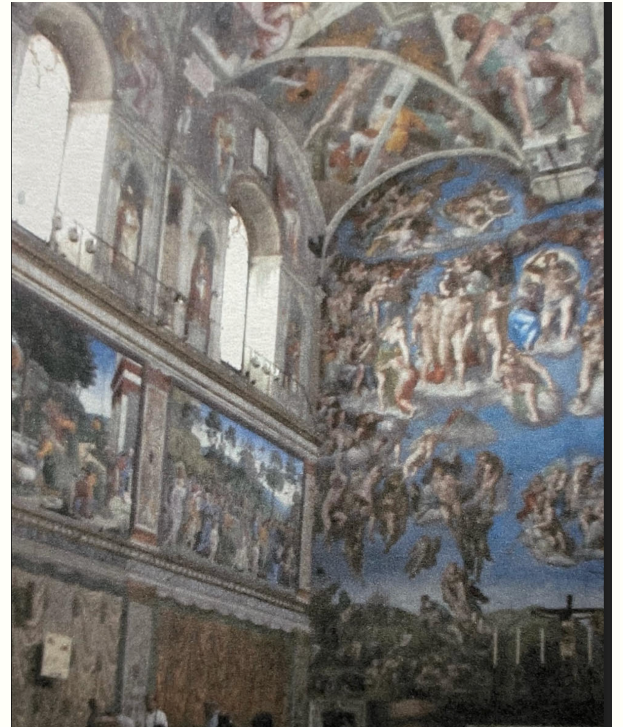
Connessioni

by David Morihara

Fifteen years ago I was able to travel through Europe. Visiting from the other side of the world, taking in the classical history of western civilization was an opportunity I will never forget. The country I enjoyed the most was Italy. As a lover of history, I was entranced by Roman history and its fascinating archaeology. It is the richness of that history and art, from the rise and fall of the Roman Empire through the Renaissance, that kept me occupied with every step. Unlike what you find in a museum, Italy has history you can touch; you can feel it under your feet as you walk through the streets.

But what really made a difference was the people. Warm, gregarious, and quick to laugh—what a joy to be around! It was interesting to find out that a unified Italy is such a young country. That explains the diversity in traditions and the food ... oh the food! So ono! That diversity reminds me of the melting pot that is Hawaii.

I have been honored to serve on the Board of the Friends of Italy Society of Hawaii. I have served on many community organizations, but I have been impressed with the quality of the people and leadership of this organization. The warm and fun-loving members of the Society have been amazing and it has been a pleasure to assist in whatever small way I can. Thank you to Chiara for persuading me to join. I look forward to my next Italian lesson and returning to Italy!



Feature Story

GUGLIELMO MARCONI “ANNIHILATES TIME AND DISTANCE” AND ESTABLISHES HAWAII AS A LEADER IN EARLY WIRELESS COMMUNICATION

By Mark Ethridge



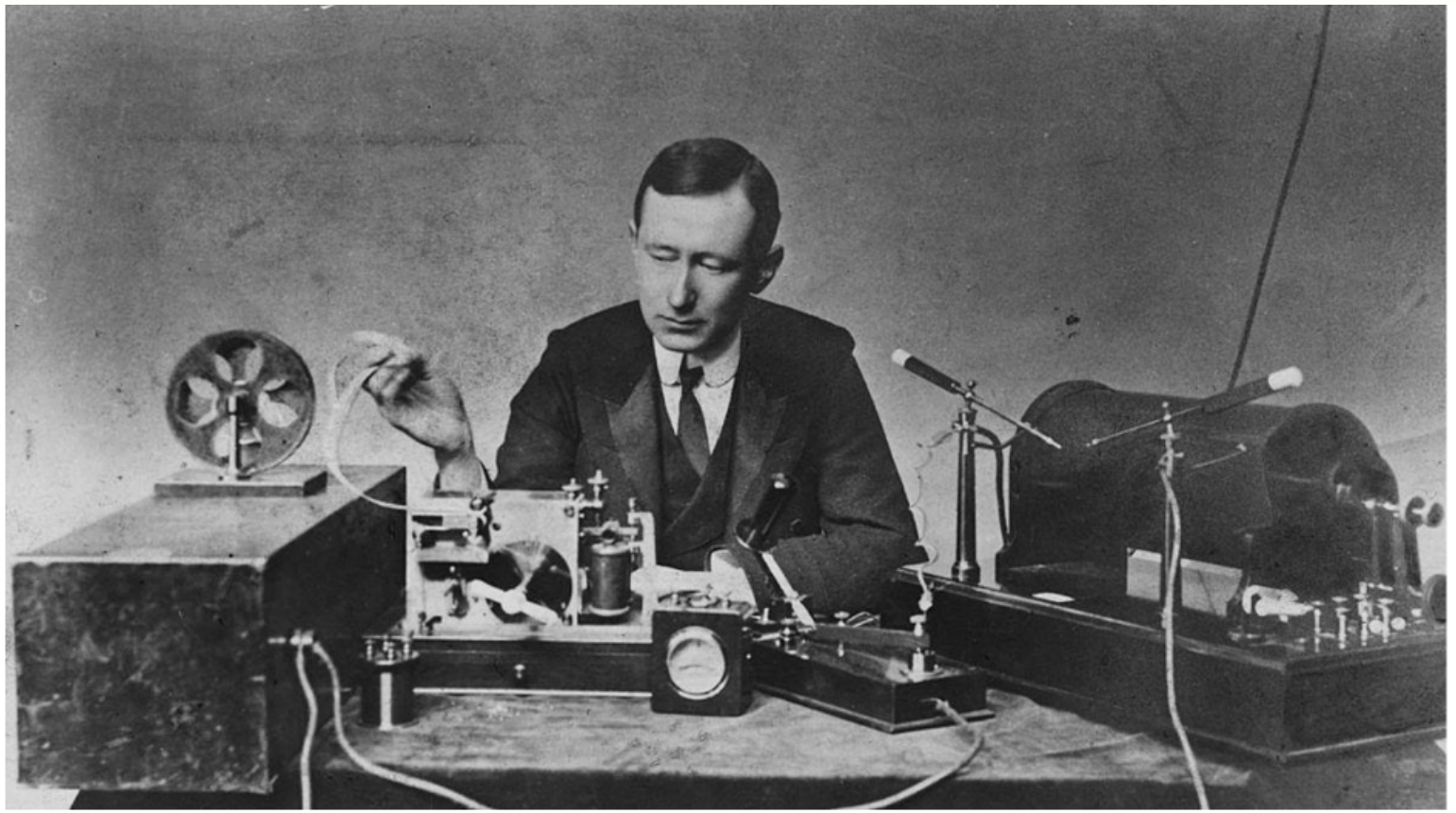
Guglielmo Marconi

During the first years of the 20th century, wireless telegraph stations constructed by Italian inventor and engineer Guglielmo Marconi would place Hawaii in the forefront of early wireless technology. The remains of Marconi’s largest station in Kahuku, once the largest in the world, have been recently placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

On March 27, 1899, a 24-year-old Guglielmo Marconi transmits the first wireless telegraph signal across the English Channel from Wimereux, France to South Foreland Lighthouse, England. Several months later, this event is reported in the Honolulu magazine, *The Friend*, in its May 1899 issue:

“Telegraph communications seem likely soon to be in operation between our islands. Marconi has successfully sent telegrams across the British channel without a wire. An invisible electric ray is flashed from a lofty mast, directed to a receiver thirty miles away, which records it. So Hawaii will not need an inter-island cable. Rain, fog and darkness do not obstruct the ray. [page 86]”

In fact, an attempt had just been made in 1889 to lay a cable between the islands of Oahu and Molokai, but just after the cable became operational and transmitted its first message, the cable snapped, could not be repaired and the line was abandoned. The only other means of transmitting messages prior to Marconi’s invention was by mail via inter-island steamship.



Marconi's experiments soon attract the interest of Fred J. Cross, an electrician who had arrived in the Hawaiian Islands in 1897 and formed the Inter-Island Telegraph Company. He sees potential in Marconi's invention and travels in September-October of 1899 to New York where Marconi is promoting his wireless at the America's Cup Yacht Race. Marconi's operators are placed on ships where they transmit back to shore.

On October 31, 1899, Cross signs a contract with Marconi's Wireless Telegraph and Signal Company to construct five stations located across the islands. Notably this is Marconi's **first major order** for ground wireless stations.

Although Marconi's representatives are delayed by an outbreak of bubonic plague in 1900, by early June the necessary equipment is delivered from England, and on June 14, a successful demonstration of the technology occurs at Iolani Palace. A message is transmitted from the palace to a station in Kaimuki, a distance of four miles. The message, "Hello! Is anybody out there?" is the **first wireless telegraph message transmitted west of the Rocky Mountains**.

In 1902, Hawaii's five stations represent **twenty percent of the twenty-five such stations in the world**, and at the end of 1904 the islands' seven stations still account **for over ten percent of the world's sixty-nine wireless telegraph stations**.

David L. Mackay, a reporter for the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, cannot believe such sophisticated technology exists on a chain of remote, sleepy islands in the middle of the Pacific when he first arrives in Honolulu in 1909:

“I remember the distinct shock of receiving wireless messages at sea. Once on shore (my beliefs and expectations by this time tattered and pitiful) I felt numbed when they offered me, as the customary and unwonderful means of communication, wireless telegraphy. It is because the wireless is today so common and so commonly accepted that I still remember vividly how great was my surprise when I first saw it as a public utility. There could have been but one reason for it. I had come from a world to which the wireless was unknown except as a plaything, a ludicrous attempt to play superman, into a world where it had been in ordinary use for several years. So much for provincialism!”

In 1913, Marconi builds a transmitting station at Kahuku for long range transmissions with a companion receiving station at Koko Head (now Hawaii Kai). The Kahuku’s station powerhouse and operating building are **the largest in the world** when constructed in 1913.



Powerhouse at Kahuku



Generators

On September 24, 1914, 198 guests travel by train from Honolulu and attend the opening of the new long-range Kahuku station. A small silver key inserted by Governor Lucius Pinkham opens the new station. The first message from the new station is sent by the governor to the President of the United States, Woodrow Wilson.

“With time and distance annihilated and space subdued through wireless triumphs and impulse, the Territory of Hawaii conveys its greetings, profound respect and sympathy to Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States, as he so earnestly seeks the blessings of peace and good will for all men and all nations.”

* The “sympathy” was for Mrs. Wilson’s death the month prior.

By 1916, Kahuku is transmitting to Funabashi Station in Japan, a distance of 4,200 miles, ***the longest distance ever undertaken by a commercial telegraph enterprise at that time.*** Eventually WWI, which began in 1914, brings an end to Marconi's dreams of a string of wireless stations encircling the globe. When the U.S. enters World War I, the Navy takes over operations at Kahuku and Koko Head. In 1919, The Radio Corporation of America (RCA) is formed and takes over American Marconi and control of the Kahuku station.

The Kahuku station is the transmission half of the 1914 system, with the receiving station located at Koko Head (now Hawaii Kai) where, among the necessary support facilities was the "Koko Head Hotel" that served as an employee dormitory. In 1928, the hotel was renovated and became the Lunalilo Home, relocating from its previous location in Makiki in central Honolulu.



Current Lunalilo Home (former Koko Head Receiver Site Hotel)

By 1919-1920 the original transmitter had already become obsolete with the replacement of spark transmitter technology and Morse Code by continuous wave and voice transmission. Nonetheless the facilities were updated and remained active for various other uses until the 1970s.

The station again made history in 1941 by delivering the news of the Pearl Harbor attack to the US mainland, which led to the entry of the United States into World War II. During World War II, the US military took over the site constructing an airfield which was subsequently



Runways adjacent to the site are visible in this World War II era photograph

After the war, the site was used for various experiments and even for drag racing in the 1950s. RCA conducted operations at the site until 1978.

Makai Ranch LLC acquired the property in 2005. In 2013, developer Jeremy Henderson succeeded in having the four original Marconi Wireless Telegraphy Station structures listed on the National Historic Registry, where they are recognized as a site critical to the development of wireless communications in Hawaii and across the world. The owner plans to preserve the site through adaptive reuse.





Ruins of the hotel (left) and power station (right)

Incidentally, Guglielmo Marconi did not visit Hawaii until a one-day stopover on his way to Asia in November 1933. On that occasion he announced that "television for commercial purposes may come within a year" and that "static in radio will soon be a thing of the past." (ASCE Hawaii section October 2002: Hawaii Wireless (Part 3) By: C. S. Papacostas).

Guglielmo Marconi (1874-1937) was born in Bologna, Italy, and is credited as the inventor of radio. In 1909, he received the Nobel Prize, in addition to numerous awards during and after his lifetime. He has been commemorated by statues, museums, mausoleum, science high schools, universities, airports, major roads and squares in Italy and internationally.

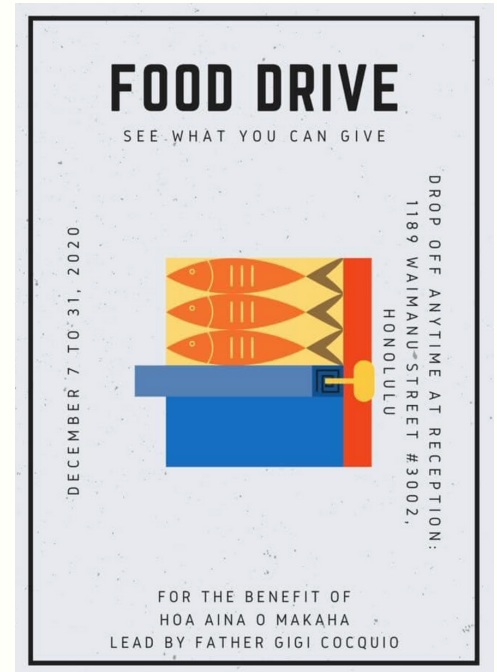
The information used for this article was obtained primarily from the following sources.

- 1) United States Department of the Interior National Park Service National Register of Historic Places Registration Form OMB No. 1024-0018 APR 19 2013. Received April 19, 2013.
- 2) Jon Anderson, www.secondshelters.com. "28-Acre, National Register Marconi Telegraph Station's History Encompasses World Wars and the Dawn of Global Communications." December 22, 2016.
- 3) ASCE Hawaii section, October 2002: Hawaii Wireless (Part 3) By: C. S. Papacostas.
- 4) Allison McLellan, www.arrl.org. "Time and Distance Annihilated." August 2018.

Mahalo & Grazie



Dear Friends of Italy,



One day, my wife Judy was making a Hawaiian quilt. A big job that requires a lot of patience and thousands of stitches to be sewn by hand. An elderly Hawaiian lady saw her and asked her for whom she was making the quilt. “It’s for a very dear friend,” Judy answered.

The lady said: “As you do each stitch, think about the person who will receive the gift; in each stitch, put a positive thought, affection, friendship, joy so when she receives this precious gift, she will feel all the love you have put into it and it will be a gift that will touch her soul forever.”

During these difficult months on our farm at Hoa Āina O Mākaha, we have planted thousands of seeds and donated tons of fresh vegetables to help hundreds of people who have lost their jobs and are struggling to survive. We try to plant every little seed with care and, when we harvest the vegetables, we add positive and loving thoughts so that those who receive them can feel some joy and the strength to carry on.

When we received your gifts donated to the people of Wai`anae, I had the same feelings. Each gift you sent to us was full of your love that comforted many people in need, like a warm blanket during cold nights.

Grazie di cuore,
Gigi



Aloha from the Editor

"No good opera plot can be sensible... People do not sing when they are feeling sensible." W. N. Auden

Aloha Amici,

When I was a kid and first heard a little opera music here and there, I would think to myself, "One day, when I'm a grown up, I'm going to learn more about opera." That day came on October 31, 2015. I had just finished reading *The Song of the Lark* by Willa Cather, an incredible novel about an opera singer loosely based on the life of Olive Fremstad, and I went to see Tannhäuser at The Met: Live in HD. I sat next to an elderly opera teacher who was surprised I made it through the whole performance. As I watched my first opera, what appealed to me was that I was witnessing the highest level of so many fields coming together in a great work: from the sets and costumes to the musicians and performers themselves.

The amount of creative hours in this one performance astounded me. In the months and years that followed, I went to many different operas in New York and watched more of them on The Met Live in HD.

I researched a little about the word *opera* and its meaning fascinates me as well. "In Italian *opera*, literally 'a work, labor, composition,' from Latin *opera* 'work, effort' (Latin plural regarded as feminine singular), secondary (abstract) noun from *operari* 'to work,' from *opus* (genitive *operis*) 'a work' (from Proto-Indo-European root *op- 'to work, produce in abundance')." (*Harper's Etymology Dictionary*) According to *A Latin Dictionary* by Lewis and Short, in Latin "*opus* is used mostly of the mechanical activity of work, as that of animals, slaves, and soldiers; *opera* supposes a free will and desire to serve."

In English, we have work and labor, but also the words function and operate. As we all know, now is a time to begin to function again, to learn how to operate in this re-opening world, to get back to work.

There has been a huge psychological shift within each of us during this year of Zoom (a homophone of Hebrew tsum צום meaning "to fast.") As we reenter the abundance of life, slowly, then perhaps digging in, I hope we can retain the lessons of our year and apply them to the rest of our lives. I encourage you to take time to record what you learned this past year.

Now we must balance the risks of two good libretto thematic standbys: Freedom and Death. We also must strongly, vociferously, actively choose Faith over Fear. We have a catalog of works to inspire us. Opera. On that note, I am off to find my way in the world, hopefully in Italy.

A presto,