

HOW DID AN INDIANA LIBRARIAN END UP IN ITALY ANYWAY?

by Betsy N. Hine



I'm sometimes asked if I have Italian ancestry. The answer is no, not a bit. And yet for the last ten years or so I seem to have immersed myself in all things Italian when previously all I knew about Italy was from my two years of high school Latin, from my love of cooking, and from being involved in music since age six! In 1994 I decided to start taking Italian, and I have been sitting in on one class or another since then. As a result of that, I've led two Globus tours to Italy.

In February 2004 I had a chance to return to Italy. I was asked to accompany a group from Eastern Illinois University (EIU) and to assist in exploring an agreement between EIU and Apicius Culinary Institute of Florence. The exploration was of an articulation possibility for certifying students from Apicius, the Culinary Institute of Florence, to the Board of Trustees BA/BS degree program of EIU. I acted as translator and evaluator of the library and information resources at the Florence site. This assisted the Family and Consumer Sciences Department at EIU as they evaluated the courses and library facilities at Apicius as part of the articulation agreement. I was thrilled to be able to spend an extended time in Florence. I would be staying in an apartment in the center of the historical area, and that would be a first for me. I was to meet the group from EIU in Detroit for the flight to Paris and Florence but, due to poor weather, I ended up going through Paris and on to Florence on my own. The other folks didn't arrive until a day later because of bad weather in Urbana-Champaign.

It was really nice to be on my own for an afternoon and evening in Florence. I strolled around the "neighborhood" of my apartment, found something to eat (NOT a problem in that city!), and tried to adjust to being in a building that was many hundreds of years old on a street (*Via delle Terme*) that had been constructed over an ancient Roman spa (thus the name Terme or spa). I was only a block from the *Ponte Vecchio* and the Arno so I could take my time looking at the bridges illuminated for the evening. Walking to the culinary institute every day and walking past the sights of the *Mercato Centrale*, the *Duomo*, and the *Palazzo*

Vecchio, which was the home of the Medicis before they moved across the Arno to the Pitti Palace, I became well acquainted with Florence. I also explored *Santa Croce* (see photo on page 9) where Michelangelo and Gallileo are entombed, *Santa Maria Novella* near the train station, *San Lorenzo* where Michelangelo prepared the sculptures for the Medici Chapel, and *Santo Spirito* where I saw a Michelangelo sculpted crucifix being carried in a procession during Mass. We visited several of the Antinori family vineyards outside of the city and had lunch at the Antinori home where we experienced first hand the cuisine of Tuscany paired with wines of the region. The Antinori family is one of the largest wine producing families in Italy. We saw barrels of wine being aged in an ancient Benedictine monastery where the walls were at least three feet thick, providing a constant temperature of around 55 degrees without any air conditioning. The monastery was still inhabited by four Benedictine monks. This was a day to really take in the Tuscan landscape, although in February there was not much growing in the vineyards or other agricultural fields. This trip exposed a completely different Italy from my first two trips. I realized what it was to live in this area, and I began a working relationship with some specific agencies, primarily the culinary institute.

This trip also gave me an idea for future trips to Italy. I spoke to the founder and director of Apicius about working on the small library they had accumulated for the culinary institute. I needed to do that anyway to help with the evaluation of their collection. We agreed that the library could use some organization, along with collection development work. I compiled a list of titles that were required reading for the courses at Apicius and then contacted my friends at *Casalini Libri*. We developed a plan whereby I would create a core list of resources needed for a two-year culinary curriculum, inventory the Apicius collection, and then start a mechanism for Apicius to order material through *Casalini Libri*. When I returned to Indiana State University (ISU) I made preliminary contacts with two American culinary schools with which I was somewhat familiar, Cordon Bleu in Miami and Johnson & Wales University with four campuses located in Providence,

Rhode Island; North Miami, Florida; Denver, Colorado; and Charlotte, North Carolina. Then, on two different trips, I visited the librarians at the Johnson & Wales campuses in Charlotte and Providence. Several times I spoke on the phone and e-mailed the librarian at the Cordon Bleu campus. Between these two visits and that phone/e-mail contact, I compiled two core lists of resources that I thought would work for Apicius.

In spring 2005 I had the chance to go to Florence again, this time for two weeks, the first week to help lead a spring break study abroad trip for Eastern Illinois University and the same for Indiana State University the second week. Each week we took cooking classes, had tours of various museums and areas of the city, ate at restaurants where either the teaching chefs at Apicius or interns from the international student body of professional track culinary students cooked, and generally enjoyed the local Florence scene. Again we stayed in apartments and learned our various “neighborhoods” as we explored the city. This time my apartment was across the Arno River in the area call the *Oltrarno*, and I “had” to cross the *Ponte Vecchio* each day on my way to class. What a wonderful walk to school each day! The group had several field trips during this two-week period, but the most delightful one was to two of the Frescobaldi family wine estates north of Florence, *Pomino* and *Nippozzano*. There we toured wine cellars - parts of their encompassing buildings were 1000 years old! We also had a wonderful lunch at one of the family homes, this time pairing appropriate Frescobaldi wines with typical Tuscan cuisine. This family has been in the wine business for over 700 years, and the tour guide was a 30th generation family member who taught some of the wine classes at Apicius! The only way to tour these family estates is through a family member since they are not open to the public so we certainly felt very lucky and privileged to have such an experience. Being able to share this place to which I had grown so attached with these college students and other adults just enhanced the experience for me, and I think having someone along who was so familiar with the area also enhanced their experience, at least that’s what they indicated. It was a delight to see them, some of them outside the U.S. for the first time, take in the sights and appreciate the trip for all its historical, artistic, and culinary joys.

On this trip I met with the *Casalini Libri* staff in their fantastic offices in Fiesole overlooking a postcard view of Florence. We reviewed the lists of suggested materials, and they agreed that they could put the two lists together into one spreadsheet in a way that we could easily track what needed to be ordered initially. Apicius could then make a first selection for the library. Thanks to e-mail attachments, *Casalini Libri* could send me their list once the spreadsheet was composed.

Earlier in that academic year I had applied for a six-month sabbatical from August 1, 2005, to February 1,

2006, with part of my sabbatical spent working on the culinary library for Apicius. After I returned from the spring break trip of 2005 I found that my sabbatical proposal had been accepted. I then started making plans for another trip to Florence for October 2005, this time to spend at least three weeks. I continued to work on the book list and make my plans for that trip. This trip I spent three days in Rome, took a scenic drive down the Amalfi Coast, and then caught the train to Florence. During the three weeks I was in Florence, my apartment was in a neighborhood near the Arno, adjacent to the *Piazza (Plaza) Ognisanti* which is near the train station and *Santa Maria Novella* but also very near to all the historic sites of the center city. I began to work on the inventory of the Apicius library, identifying what they already had that was on the core lists of the U.S. culinary schools, what had already been ordered through *Casalini Libri*, and what they had that was not on the list. The spreadsheet from *Casalini Libri* needed some revision as it was not in the best arrangement and many of the publishers, ISBNs, editions, and authors (even some titles) were either not complete or were wrong. Once I had my listing completed I was able to “clean up” the spreadsheet and compile a new core list that allowed easier assessment of what was still needed. Because of some technical and electric problems with my laptop, I ended up doing a combination of a computer list and an old fashioned handwritten book list. I used Citation 9 as a database until I started having problems with my laptop. Eventually I had to transcribe my handwritten notes onto the Citation database after I returned home and that resulted in a more complete bibliographical list of what was in the library, ending up with about 375 entries. This took most of my time during the three week trip and gave me a good file to convert to a bibliography which Apicius could use as a book catalog for their collection, one that students and faculty could easily access. The bibliography could be completed once I returned home. Information about new purchases could be sent to me via e-mail, or better yet, I could add the new material on subsequent visits to Florence!

During this trip I also met the director and the librarian at a newly created campus associated with Apicius, the Florence University of the Arts. I worked with the librarian who was just beginning to plan the fine arts and humanities collection. We discussed the organization, collection development, and classification that she would be using. We continued to correspond after I returned home from my sabbatical. By January 2006 I sent Apicius a corrected and revised spreadsheet as well as the completed bibliography.

In spring 2006 I helped to lead another ISU group for a study abroad trip to Florence. We took 27 people this time, again staying in apartments. While there we enrolled in cooking classes, toured the city and the

museums, and ate well at the trattorias tucked into little hidden streets in the city. Again we were able to go to the Frescobaldi wine estates and enjoy the Tuscan countryside, food, wine, and the incredible history of this wine-producing family. While on this trip I worked on the library and added the newly purchased titles to the list. I was also happy to see that they had continued my re-arrangement of their collection and that they had used some of my suggestions for labeling, generally making things easier to use by students and faculty. I also visited the library at the Florence University of the Arts and was very pleased to see the amount of work that the librarian had been able to accomplish and to see that many of my suggestions had been helpful to her as well.

On one of my early trips to Apicius I had discussed the project with the culinary faculty. They were excited that they and their students would be able to have access to a more organized library. They also said that they could really use a glossary of Italian cooking terms explained in English. While the classes are generally taught in English and while the professors' English is relatively good, there are often concepts that they need to present that are difficult for them to explain in English. I knew that creating a glossary would be out of the realm of possibility for the sabbatical but, once I completed the commitments that I had made for that, I started working with my Italian professor, also a very good Italian cook, to compile such a glossary. We gathered Italian cooking terms from various places and either translated the Italian or wrote our own Italian and English explanations. We did a draft of this over summer 2006 in preparation for my professor's trip to Italy in September where he would be taking cooking classes in celebration of his retirement. We will continue to work on this project with the chefs at Apicius and perhaps be able to get it published. It's always good to have a project going, especially if it might give one an excuse to travel!



Inside Apicius Culinary Institute of Florence; pictured Betsy Hine (author) chopping vegetables, ISU students, and the Culinary Institute chef

If you've never been to Italy, or even if you have, I can't encourage you too much to consider going or going again. As many times as I've been, I never tire of it, and I always see something that I've never seen before. I'm getting ready to take another group of ISU students, alumni, and others for a spring break trip in 2007. I'm looking forward to this trip, my seventh, just as much as I did the first one. The landscape is spectacular; the architecture is awesome; the art is breathtaking; the food is unequalled; and the people are the nicest you'll find anywhere! Even though the Euro is not always friendly to the U.S. dollar, it can still be an economical trip if you look around for deals. Who knows? Maybe I'll do a tour for librarians some day!!
Ciao!

To learn more about Italy and its culture and people, check out the resources listed below.

SELECTED FILMS IN ITALIAN

Caro Diario

Ciao Professore

Cinema Paradiso (new version)

Fiorile

Johnny (or Gianni) Stecchino

The Leopard

Luce dei miei occhi

Mediterraneo

Il Mostro

Pane e Tulipani

Il Postino

Lo Sceicco Bianco

Tutti Siamo Bene

La Vita E Bella



Santa Croce, church in Florence

SELECTED FILMS SET IN ITALY (IN ENGLISH)

Enchanted April

A Month by the Lake

My House in Umbria

Room with a View

Under the Tuscan Sun

A VERY FEW SELECTED BOOKS ABOUT ITALY, SET IN ITALY, THE RENAISSANCE, ARTISTS OF THE RENAISSANCE, ETC.

The architecture of Michelangelo. (1961).
New York: Viking Press.

Barzini, L. (1964). *The Italians*.
New York: Atheneum.

Chambers, D.S. (1971).
Patrons and artists in the Italian Renaissance.
Columbia: University of South Carolina Press.

Grisham, J. (2005). *The Broker*. New York: Doubleday.

King, R. (2000). *Brunelleschi's dome: How a Renaissance genius reinvented architecture*.
New York: Walker & Co.

Parks, T. (1992). *Italian neighbours: An Englishman in Verona*. London: Heinemann.

Severgnini, B. (2006). *La bella figura: A field guide to the Italian mind.* (G. Watson, Trans.).
New York: Broadway Books.

Any book by Frances Mayes

Mysteries of Donna Leon

A FEW SELECTED SUBJECT HEADINGS

National characteristics, Italian.

Italy Description and travel.

Italy Social life and customs 1945-

Michelangelo Buonarroti, 1475-1564.

Brunelleschi, Filippo, 1377-1446.

Santa Maria del Fiore (Cathedral : Florence, Italy)

Domes Italy Florence Design and construction.

Florence (Italy) Buildings, structures, etc.

Renaissance.

Art, Renaissance—Italy.

Artists—Italy.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Betsy N. Hine has been a librarian in Indiana since 1973. She has worked at IU East in Richmond, Indiana, at the Centerville-Center Township Public Library in Centerville, Indiana, at the Speedway Public Library in Indianapolis, at the University of Evansville in Evansville, Indiana, and, since 1987, at Indiana State University. She taught reference classes for Indiana University when they were offered in Evansville. She is a regular reviewer for *Technical Services Quarterly*. She has written numerous articles on issues such as library services for adult students, library services for distance learners, authority control, and catalogers' workstations. Her current research interest is in the area of leadership, particularly servant-leadership about which she has created an annotated bibliography which can be found on the Robert K. Greenleaf Center webpage at <http://www.greenleaf.org>.