



*Marty*

## Parla Italiano??

*by Marty Curry*

*Marty Curry is one of the recent recipients of a scholarship from the Seattle Perugia Sister City Association for language study at the Università per Stranieri di Perugia,*

I had the good fortune to spend September 2008 in Perugia, Italy where I studied Italian language at Università per Stranieri di Perugia. It was a wonderful experience and one I hope many others will take advantage of in the future.

The first day of registration and being tested for the appropriate class level was somewhat intimidating, and was the beginning of my immersion into Italian language and customs. Having studied Italian a bit here in Seattle, I was placed in the second level elementary class, which turned out to be perfect. The instructors spoke only Italian so we all had to be on our toes to understand the assignments and directions to various classes throughout that first week. I was the only US citizen in the class, and only a few other students (a Canadian and several northern Europeans) also spoke English, so Italian was truly the common language for most of us.

We went to class five days a week -- 2 hours on Monday for Pronunciation/Phonetics, 5 hours Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday with lectures, workbook exercises and conversation, and 3 hours on Friday. Most of us were very regular and got to know each other as well as you can with limited language proficiency! I am amazed the instructors were so calm and accepting as they listened to us struggle with understanding conjugations, expressions and in trying to converse.

Perugia is easy to navigate on foot, and bus routes and services are excellent. I like to swim and discovered the community pool (Piscina Pelliini), which was wonderful -- and as busy as our pools are for lap swims. It was wonderful to feel part of a community, finding favorite markets and cafés, exploring winding streets and going to concerts and other community events.

While I worked diligently during the week, I traveled on weekends, meeting a friend who was traveling in Italy. It is very easy to get to Rome, Firenze, and even Cinque Terre for a weekend. Day trips are easy to Siena, Assisi, Deruta, Todi, Cortona -- the list is seemingly endless! There are also cultural events going on in Perugia and Umbria during many months of the year -- I attended to wonderful concerts with visiting groups that were part of a Musica Sagra festival.

Would I go back?? Yes, definitely -- a month of study was great, but now I need to go to the next level of both understanding and speaking the language. And of course now that I know Perugia, I want to go back and enjoy that sense of familiarity with a wonderful city and people.

— M.C.



*Marty's Class in Perugia.*