

Annual Report *2013*

Fulfilling a Mission and Mandate

When the Chair of Italian Studies, Lakehead University became the **Institute of Italian Studies-Lakehead University** in 2006 its mission was “to promote the appreciation, research, and study of the Italian language, Italian-Canadian culture and history in Thunder Bay and Northwestern Ontario.” The programs and activities of the Institute in 2013 remained true to that mission. For the first time, its publications in 2013 – *To the South of Things (A Sud Delle Cose)* by Pasqualino Bongiovanni and John Potestio’s *The R. F. Welch (Veltri) Company (La Storia Della Ditta Welch)* – were published in both English and Italian. The Institute’s annual culinary wine tasting dinner, “Vineyards from the Alps to Sicily”, offered our patrons and guests some of the finest cuisine and wines of Italy. Two concerts, each with an Italian theme, were sponsored by the Institute. In November it sponsored the “Viva Italia” Thunder Bay Symphony concert held at the Italian Cultural Centre featuring Michael Ciuffo and in December the Consortium Aurora Borealis Vivaldi concert with Jeremy Bell. The Institute also lent its financial support to the Italian-Canadian Archives Project which will promote and organize a systematic national strategy to encourage the gathering of, and access to, materials about the past and present Italian-Canadian experience across the country. Finally, the Institute has pledged \$25,000 to the Free Tuition scholarship program at Lakehead University which will permit students in Lakehead’s languages program to study Italian in Cortona, Italy. Each of the above initiatives has validated the mission and mandate of the Institute established in 2006.

Roy Piovesana,
President,
Institute of Italian Studies-Lakehead University

Publications and Research

The publications and research projects of the Institute in 2013 have, as in the past, broken new ground. In January, the board of directors undertook to publish the English translation of Pasqualino Bongiovanni's engaging book of poetry entitled *To The South of Things (A Sud Delle Cose)*. Giuseppe Vilella provided the Institute with the English text which was studied by a committee of the board — John Potestio, Roseanne Rambaldini, Francesco Pedulla, Frank Pullia, and Roy Piovesana. Suggested revisions were sent to the author and translator. Final proofs were then prepared for printing by Friesens Corporation in Canada and published by the Institute. Linguistically, this exercise afforded the committee the opportunity to more precisely translate complex ideas originally written in Italian into English. Technically, the process illustrated the international usage of computer applications such as Adobe InDesign and Adobe Photoshop in the preparation of prepress files for publication. The Institute of Italian Studies-Lakehead University was proud indeed to make this collection of poems, originally published in Italian in 2006, to an English speaking audience in Canada and the United States.

An Italian translation of John Potestio's *The R. F. Welch (Veltri) Company* was completed by Giuseppe Vilella in the spring of 2013. *La Storia Della Ditta Welch* is now available in pdf format and will be placed on the Institute's website www.iislu.com. A limited number of copies will be printed for distribution in Canada and in Italy.

A fitting sequel to the publication of *The R. F. Welch (Veltri) Company* was the designation of the Welch Company as a National Historic Event by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada in July 2011 and the subsequent unveiling of a plaque on October 18 at the Italian Cultural Centre on Algoma Street. The plaque's inscription is in English, French, and Italian. This project came to fruition on the recommendation of the Institute and with the support and cooperation of the Italian Society of Port Arthur.

The publications of the Institute continue to be sold in bookstores and boutiques in Thunder Bay (Chapters, Coles Bookstore, The Thunder Bay International Airport Gift Shop, The Thunder Bay Museum, Hull's Family Bookstore, Squitti's). Most important, they are available in public and university libraries throughout Canada and the United States and frequently cited by researchers in published papers.

In 2012 and 2013, the Institute initiated several research projects that are presently in progress and which will be published in digital or print format, namely, a Biographical Dictionary of Italians in Thunder Bay, An Illustrated History of Thunder Bay Italians, and the experiences of immigrants from Azzano Decimo who settled in Thunder Bay during the twentieth century.

Speaker Series

The Institute's Speaker Series is a cornerstone of its mission and mandate. Since 2007 it has grown to become a highly anticipated event within the Italian community and in Thunder Bay generally. Speakers who have graciously participated in this program are nationally and internationally respected. For example, in 2010 Canadian writer and novelist and Governor General's Award recipient for fiction Nino Ricci spoke on the theme "Identity in a post-identity era." The following year, Elio Costa, Dante scholar and professor of Italian literature at York University spoke on "The Idea of Italy in Dante's Divine Comedy" to mark the 150th anniversary of Italian unification. Last year the Institute invited Antonio Nicaso, an international expert on organized crime, to speak on "The Two Italies: The Role of the South in Contemporary Italy." Each of these individuals made special presentations to students on the Lakehead University campus.

In 2013, the Institute's launch of Pasqualino Bongiovanni's book of poetry *To the South of Things* coincided with the Speaker Series. Pasqualino travelled from Lamezia Terme, Italy to Thunder Bay in early July to read a selection of his poetry before an appreciative audience at the Italian Cultural Centre. Roseanne Rambaldini read the poems in English, and translated Pasqualino's comments and questions directed to him from the floor. This was a unique and new departure for the Institute's Speaker Series. The event was "streamed live" to Lamezia Terme on July 3, the day of the book launch and continues to be available on our website www.iislu.com. Pasqualino, together with Frank Pullia, travelled to Winnipeg to promote his book of poetry. Prior to his return to Italy, he stopped at Guelph, Ontario as part of his Canadian book promotion tour.

This year, Joe Volpe, publisher of the Italian newspaper *Corriere Canadese* and former Member of the House of Commons (1988-2011) and federal cabinet minister under Prime Minister Paul Martin (2003-2011) has accepted an invitation to participate in the Institute's Speaker Series on Wednesday, February 19, 2014 at the Da Vinci Centre.

Finances and Governance

One of the many strengths of the Institute of Italian Studies-Lakehead University is its financial independence. Annually, it organizes a culinary wine tasting and dinner in November and a golf tournament in June both held at the Whitewater Golf Club. Under the leadership of astute and talented board members — Silvio DiGregorio, Franco Crupi, Joe Danielle, Angela Maltese, Lina Nigro, Saverio Nigro, Mark Piovesana, and Joe Quaresima — these projects generate sufficient funds to support the initiatives and sponsorships of the Institute. In 2013, donations to the Institute were made by Mark Piovesana through the Scotiabank Employee Volunteer Program (\$1,000) and by Maureen Comuzzi, President, Principe Di Piemonte Society Ladies Auxiliary (\$1,200).

The Institute of Italian Studies-Lakehead University is a non-profit cultural organization in the Province of Ontario with a charitable registration number. The constitution, by-laws, and minutes of the corporation are maintained and prepared by The Institute of Italian Studies-Lakehead University's secretary-treasurer and legal counsel, Richard Buset.

Seventeen members sit on the Institute board of directors. They are:

Roy Piovesana (President), John Bonofiglio (Vice President), Richard Buset (Secretary/Treasurer) Franco Crupi, Silvio DiGregorio, Joe Daniele, Angela Maltese, Lina Nigro, Saverio Nigro, Mark Piovesana, John Potestio, Francesco Pedulla, Frank Pullia, Joe Quaresima, Roseanne Rambaldini, Joe Virdiramo, Jill Zachary.

It was an honour and privilege for me as President of the Institute of Italian Studies-Lakehead University to preside at its monthly meetings. I sincerely thank all directors for their dedication and sage counsel given in the best interests of the Institute.

*Roy Piovesana,
President,
Institute of Italian Studies-Lakehead University*