

INSTITUTE OF
ITALIAN STUDIES
LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY

Annual Report
2014

A Time of Renewal

To be true to its mission and mandate established almost ten years ago, the Institute of Italian Studies–Lakehead University scrutinized its activities and programmes in 2014. This process of renewal began in January 2014 with a strategic planning session led by directors Frank Pullia and Franco Crupi. The outcome of the session emphasized the need to communicate effectively with Lakehead University, the Italian community in Thunder Bay, and the people of Thunder Bay through an improved website and the initiation of contacts through social media. In addition, the need to ensure the existence and continued financial independence of the Institute prompted board discussions around nurturing our existing and longstanding fundraising events such as the golf tournament and the wine tasting dinner as well as appealing to a broader constituency for financial support. Moreover, the possibilities of augmenting board membership to include individuals with academic expertise or an abiding interest in aspects of Italian culture were given consideration. These individuals need not be Italian born or of Italian descent. The importance of dedicated board members with varied backgrounds and interests committed to the promotion of Italian culture is fundamental to the continued existence of the Institute of Italian Studies–Lakehead University.

Roy Piovesana,
President,
Institute of Italian Studies–Lakehead University.

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Research and Publications

Research and publication relating to the experiences of Italian immigrants and Italian Canadians in Thunder Bay and northwestern Ontario is one of the cornerstones of the Institute of Italian Studies-Lakehead University's mandate. Since 2005, the Institute has published five monographs in this area and an English translation of a book of poetry in 2013 by Pasqualino Bongiovanni *To The South of Things (A Sud Delle Cose)*. This past year a manuscript prepared by John Potestio on the Azzanesi of Thunder Bay was completed and is being edited for publication by the Institute in the fall of 2015. *The Azzanesi of Thunder Bay* represents a new venture for the Institute in that the funds needed for its editing, prepress work, and printing (slightly in excess of \$4,000) were raised from individuals and businessmen who emigrated from Assano Decimo and currently reside in Thunder Bay. This process may be followed by the Institute for future publications.

The Institute of Italian Studies-Lakehead University supported research beyond the scope of local history publications. In 2014 it was a supporter of Dr. Carney Matheson, professor of Anthropology at Lakehead University, as his research team travelled to the South Tyrol Museum of Archaeology in Bolzano, Italy where the 5,300-year-old Ötzi the Ice Man is housed. There they examined approximately 20 artefacts found with Ötzi's body. The Institute helped fund and equip the research team. Crupi Consulting Group provided shirts and lab coats which identified that the researchers were from Lakehead University and the Institute. Professor Matheson's research in Bolzano Italy will be the subject of his talk as part of the Institute of Italian Studies Speaker Series held in conjunction with the Lakehead University's research and innovation week on 12 March 2015.

The publications of the Institute continue to be sold in bookstores and boutiques in Thunder Bay. Most important, they are widely held and available for loan in public and university libraries in Canada, the United States, and England. They are frequently cited by researchers and writers in published articles. In addition, Roy Piovesana's *The Italians of Fort William's East End, 1907-1969* and John Potestio's *The R. F. Welch (Veltri) Company* were nominated for awards by The Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society.

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Sponsorship of Cultural Events

Since 2012, the Institute of Italian Studies has made part of its mandate the sponsorship of cultural events having a distinct Italian theme or subject. It continues its financial support of the **Consortium Aurora Borealis** in their annual “all Italian” musical concert or whenever their programmes highlight Italian composers. For the first time, the Institute has made a financial contribution to a **Magnus Theatre** production. “Moose On the Loose” to be performed on the Magnus Theatre stage on 9 - 25 April 2015 is a comedy written by Dina Morrone about a family from Italy “who have set up home in Way Up Bay, Ontario.” While there are limits to its financial commitments to these institutions, sponsorships of cultural events by the Institute raises its profile in Thunder Bay while at the same time promoting Italian music, drama, and literature.

Speaker Series

In 2014, the Honourable 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 participated in the Institute’s Speaker Series on Wednesday, February 19 at the Da Vinci Centre. For a variety of reasons, the attendance at the evening presentation was poor. Nevertheless, while in Thunder Bay Mr. Volpe met directors of the Institute at a breakfast meeting, held a session with Lakehead University political science students on campus, and was interviewed in both English and Italian by Frank Pullia. The planning for the 2015 segment of the Speaker Series with Lakehead University Anthropology Professor Dr. Carney Matheson on Ötzi the Ice Man was done by the Institute’s vice president John Bonofiglio. The presentation is to be held in the John N. Paterson Auditorium at the Lakehead University Law School building. (the former Port Arthur Collegiate Institute)

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Finance and Governance

One of the strengths of the Institute of Italian Studies-Lakehead University is its financial independence. Since 2006, it has organized an annual wine tasting and dinner in November and a golf tournament in June both held at the Whitewater Golf Club. Presently, these projects generate sufficient funds to support the initiatives and sponsorships of the Institute. From time to time, donations are made to the Institute by individuals and financial institutions. In the fall of 2015, the Institute is planning a luncheon to recognize all those who have contributed financial resources and time to its successful programmes.

Throughout 2014, the Institute has had a close relationship with Lakehead University. It has continued its pledge of \$25,000 to the Free Tuition scholarship programme at the University permitting students to study Italian in Cortona, Italy. Deborah Comuzzi, Vice President External Relations and Dr. Gillian Siddall, Dean, Faculty of Social Science and Humanities attended the February 2014 board meeting to respond to questions board members may have had relating to the Institute's involvement with the university. Through its Speaker Series the Institute is participating in the university's 10th Anniversary Research and Innovation Week (7 - 13 March 2015).

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's secretary-treasurer and legal counsel, Richard Buset. The by-laws of the Institute provide for a seventeen member board. Currently, the following individuals are directors: **Roy Piovesana (President), John Bonofiglio (Vice President) Richard Buset (Secretary-Treasurer), Franco Crupi, Silvio Di-Gregorio, Joe Daniele, Angela Maltese, Lina Nigro, Saverio Nigro, Mark Piovesana, John Potestio, Francesco Pedula, Frank Pullia, Joe Quaresima, Roseanne Rambaldini, and Joe Virdiramo.**

Once again, it has been 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
March, 2015.*