



ASSOCIATION OF ITALIAN-CANADIAN WRITERS  
 ASSOCIATION DES ÉCRIVAIN(E)S ITALO-CANADIEN(NE)S  
 ASSOCIAZIONE SCRITTORI, SCRITTRICI ITALO-CANADESI

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## Toronto 1996 Conference

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### 1996 -1998 Executive :

**President:**

Pasquale Verdicchio

**Secretary/Treasurer:**

Caterina (Buetti) Sotiriadis

**Bulletin Editor:**

Marino Tuzi

**Regional Representatives:**  
 (To assist the editor)

Filippo Salvatore - *Quebec*

Antonino Mazza - *Ontario*

Caterina Edwards - *Prairies*  
 and *B.C.*

### From the Editor's Desk

#### Toronto 1996 Conference:

Let us begin by looking at what the Association accomplished in its fall 1996 Conference in Toronto and Woodbridge (just outside the present Metro Toronto boundary). By all accounts (at least by those accounts that I am familiar with through word of mouth and through correspondence), the Conference was a success and served to reinforce and revitalize the Association's sense of purpose and vision. On an individual level, it gave people a sense of place creatively, intellectually, and culturally. The Conference brought new ideas and fresh energy from a spectrum of ages. It facilitated interaction between members of the Association and writers and thinkers from other cultural communities in Canada. It also allowed the Association to be part of the community life of certain parts of Toronto and its environs. Equally important, the Conference maintained a sense of continuity in thought and outlook with past conferences.

Through the various conference events, the Association celebrated not just the literary and intellectual achievements of its members, but in its own ways it also was a testament to the accomplishments of the Italian community in Canada. The Conference had intrinsic value in and of itself. This, it seems to me, is the underlying reason why the Association continues to exist, despite the challenges that

it has faced, why it continues to enhance and expand its terrain of activities and thought, and why it continues to hit new thresholds of creative and cultural experience.

As our General Membership Meeting demonstrated, there are many diverse viewpoints, attitudes, and philosophies which encompass our Association. This diversity of thought, however, lends nuances, complexities, and a general richness to the Association. The meeting raised important issues about the future directions of the Association (as indicated by the minutes of the meeting which are published in this Newsletter), about its future mandate, and its process of self-governance. There was also the strong view that the Association should find ways to maintain its momentum between conferences. Two important suggestions were made: The Association should set up a mail box in the Internet for its membership, and it should organize some kind of activity or activities in Canada before the next conference. Both of these projects hopefully will come to fruition in 1997.





## Conference '96 Highlights: *AICW and Writers of Colour:*

I now would like to provide a synopsis of the events at the Conference for posterity and to give members and other interested parties who were not in attendance a sense of what the Conference was about. For the purpose of simplicity, I will describe the Conference in chronological order.

The Conference began on Thursday, Oct. 24, past 7:00 P.M., at the Columbus Centre. Here in this multi-functional Italian Canadian community complex, situated in a area of Metro Toronto which is strongly populated by Italians, Joseph Pivato welcomed the attendees to the Conference with an inaugural speech and then ushered in the readings for the evening. Gianna Patriarca, Antonino Mazza, Filippo Salvatore, Joseph Ranieri, and Penny Petrone led us in their own way into the cultural universe of Italian Canadian experience; some of the writers read in English, and others in Italian.

The next morning, on Friday, Oct. 25, at the Italian Cultural Institute in downtown Toronto, at 9:30 A.M., Filippo Salvatore presented a paper related to the main theme of the Conference, "Literature and Race". The paper was entitled "Differenza e razzismo nella cultura quebecchese odierna" and it explored the racist tendencies of cultural and political nationalism in modern Quebec. The next paper, "Emigration After Post-Colonialism and Multiculturalism", by Francesco Loriggio, stressed the historical significance of emigration and its underlying force in contemporary studies of minority experience. These two papers were followed by readings by Giovanni Costa (in Italian), Antonio D'Alfonso (in English), and Pasquale Verdicchio (in English). Each writer read excerpts from their work which conveyed their sense of place in Italian, Canadian, and North American society.

After a gorgeous Italian lunch, which was served by the Institute, we reconvened at Hart House at the University of Toronto, where the Association held a joint panel session with writers of colour. The session was co-

organized by Chelva Kanaganayakam, a literary critic and professor of English at the university, and Nurjehan Aziz, co-publisher of TSAR (The South Asian Review) Press, who lives in Toronto. The panellists, who were either writers or academics or both, spoke on particular issues of concern which were related to the general theme of ethnicity, race, and literary production. Pasquale Verdicchio spoke of the intersecting of race and ethnicity in the North American Italian experience; Arun Mukherjee discussed the issue of how minority literature, especially, South Asian writing, is received in the academic and literary mainstream; Cecil Foster delved into the idea of what is meant by Canadian culture and literature, proposing that any definition must be culturally and racially inclusive; Leslie Sanders noted that we must rethink what we mean by the words "Canadian" and "Canadian culture" and we must examine their underlying cultural and ideological assumptions; Cyril Dabydeen spoke of the continual struggle that minority writers face, especially writers of colour, in getting their work published and recognized; Chelva Kanaganayakam stressed that what is considered to be part of Canadian Literature should include work written by minority Canadians about their place of birth, since a minority writer's cultural heritage remains integral to his/her consciousness and world view.

The discussion that followed was fertile in thought and viewpoint, engaging the panellists with the audience. The discussion took many forms: individuals asked panellists to clarify or elaborate on areas in their presentations; the panellists' points were followed up by members of

the audience who wanted to add other ideas to them or wanted to look at the points presented from a different perspective. At times there was cross-discussion among members in the audience. There was a sense that there was much commonality among the participants and attendees at the Conference. That the experiences of Italian Canadian writers and literary and cultural critics mirrored or at different levels confirmed the marginality and devaluation experienced by writers of colour. That mainstream Canadian culture and literary activity, in most cases, did not reflect the contributions made by minority writers to the evolution of Canadian Literature. The joint session provided a wider view of minority experience and writing in Canada and inspired some of the participants to think about having other joint events sometime in the future.

Later in the evening after nourishment and drink, the Conference reconvened for readings by Italian Canadian writers and writers of colour at the Claude Bissell Building at the University of Toronto. The readings began shortly after 7:00 P.M. and were hosted by Joseph Pivato. Mary di Michele, Nino Ricci, and Joseph Maviglia read from their work - work that explored the Italian Canadian imaginary. This creative rendering of human experience was part of larger multicultural and multiracial perspective that encompassed the evening's event. Among the writers of colour who read were: Cecil Foster, who read about the difficulties about being young and black in Toronto, especially in terms of the problems that the black community has experienced with members of the Metro Toronto police force; Cyril Dabydeen, who read poems about finding a sense of place in the host society; and Shyam Selvadurai who explored the class and racial divisions of Sri Lankan society.

The final day of the Conference, on Saturday, Oct. 26, was equally stimulating and busy. From early morning to late lunch time, events were held at Ansley Grove Library, a local library in



Woodbridge. In Woodbridge, the towering modern buildings, late nineteenth architecture, and thickly tree-lined streets of downtown Toronto were replaced by the geometry of roomy subdivision homes, by a long playing field, which was used by local high school students and other members of that part of the Woodbridge community, and by the bright blueness of the open sky.

I chaired the papers presented by several individuals. Licia Canton, in her paper, "Fabrizio's Confusion: The Risks and Pleasures of Revised Translations", examined the differences between the French and English versions of Antonio D'Alfonso's novel, *Avril ou l'anti-passion and Fabrizio's Passion*, suggesting that cultural context influenced the shaping of each text. John Fainella, in his analysis of a particular creative writing event hosted by an Italian Canadian organization in a part of Metro Toronto, examined what he perceived to be the cultural and socio-psychological processes underpinning creative work by aspiring writers centring on various themes on Italian Canadian experience. These two presentations were followed by lively and energetic discussion. Rosamaria Plevano also presented her own personal observations on the task of translating Antonino Mazza's poetic work, *The Way I Remember It*, into the Italian language. She also discussed the problem of receptivity in Italian academia to literary work by Italian Canadian writers. Caterina Edwards read an excerpt from her latest work; a novel which mixes various genres, such as realism and the gangster melodrama, to present a particular view of the intersection of Italian and Canadian experience.

With a good appetite, we went to lunch at the Friuli Centre, where we relaxed and chatted together. The food, wine, and service were just splendid.

After lunch, I took on the task of slowly reconvening the Conference. I presented my paper on the political and economic challenges facing the Italian Canadian community and the implications of these challenges on the cultural and

social well being of the community. This paper was followed by a discussion which was chaired by Antonio D'Alfonso. Mary di Michele and Pasquale Verdicchio then read from their poetry and regaled the audience with their elegant prose and vibrant vision of life. We took a brief break and then began the General Membership Meeting, which was very energetic, and generated a host of productive ideas. (Please see the minutes of the meeting in this Newsletter).

The last event of the Conference was held in downtown Toronto at the Davenport Perth Neighbourhood Centre. The event was organized by members of Voce Alternativa, an Italian Canadian writing and activist women's collective based in Toronto. Among the readers were Gianna Patriarca, who also hosted the event, Theresa Carilli and Rachel Guido DeVries, both of whom are from the United States and presented their unique views of being Italian, female, and lesbian in America. Others who read were Sonia D'Agostino, Lena Virgilio, Francesca Gesuladi, and Patrizia Tavormina. Mary Melfi had a scene from her latest play, *Sex Therapy*, enacted before the audience by several actors. This evening of women's readings presented a spectrum of experiences and viewpoints and the use of different literary forms (poetry, prose, and drama) which examined the different levels of Italian women's lives in North America, and which affirmed, critiqued, satirized, and contested aspects of traditional and contemporary Italian culture in Canada and the United States.

After this evening's event was over, some of us who attended the Conference of the Association of Italian Canadian Writers converged on Zucca, a lively Italian restaurant in the uptown part of Toronto. There we unwound into the late part of the evening, reflecting with enthusiasm, energy, sentimentality, and affection on the events that had taken place over the last several days and evenings.



## *Books and Publishers:*

The presence of books and publishers are an intrinsic feature of any writerly conference or event. It should be noted that the books put on display by individual writers, books which were self-published or produced by publishing companies, and the books put on display by publishing companies made concrete the literary achievements of the writers at the Conference. TSAR Press exhibited its books at the joint session of the Association of Italian Canadian Writers and the writers of colour and it gave the people in attendance a sense of this publishing company's scope and orientation; the books ranged from literature to literary and cultural studies. The presence of Guernica Editions throughout the Conference underscored the fundamental relationship between creativity, intellectual activity, writing and publication. As the main publisher of creative writers and literary and cultural critics of Italian heritage in Canada, Guernica Editions, which is under the directorship of Antonio D'Alfonso, continues to give voice to contemporary Italian Canadian experience. Guernica Editions continues to expose readers to the literary and formal achievements of established and newer generations of writers of Italian origin and to critical studies which analyse minority writing in Canada, especially Italian Canadian Literature.

We congratulate Guernica on its formidable achievements over almost two decades of publication. We also encourage members and other interested persons to purchase Guernica's books for personal reading and/or for use as course texts. Guernica Editions can be reached at (416) 657-8885 (business/fax) in Toronto.

The day after the Conference was over, Sunday, Oct. 27, in the late afternoon, people were invited to attend a launch by Guernica Editions, hosted by Grano restaurant in Toronto. Antonio D'Alfonso, the publisher of Guernica Editions, presented the event. Among the writers, who read or had their work read from their books that were being released, were Mary Melfi, Theresa Carilli, and Rachel Guido DeVries. Antonio D'Alfonso also released the publication of his collection of critical essays on minority writing, *Italian Canadian Literature and culture in English Canada and Quebec*.

When the launch was over, we shared warm good byes, and headed back to our places in the world.

It's a wrap!

Before, I sign off, however, once again I encourage members to send in news on events, publications, and other activities that you believe are pertinent to the Association. I also encourage members to write to the Newsletter about their reflections on and/or their responses to ongoing related issues and work produced by writers.

Until next time. Take Care. Ciao, Marino Tuzi.

P.S. Let us know what you think of our "new look" thanks to Caterina (Buetti) Sotiriadis and the excellent secretarial skills of Jeannette Perrin-Lévesque.



## Minutes of the 1996 General Membership Meeting (AGM)



General Membership Meeting  
Saturday October 26, 1996  
Friuli Centre, Woodbridge, Ontario

*Approx. 20 members were present: The meeting was chaired by Pasquale Verdicchio.*

### 1. President's Report: (Pasquale Verdicchio)

Pasquale thanked everyone for attending and Joseph Pivato especially for all the work that he had done in organizing the conference.

Pasquale proposed several projects for the next two years:

- a) Media watch committee
  - respond to the media re stereotypes;
  - one person should assume this role for the Association. Pasquale indicated he would assume this position if no one else wished to.
- b) American Italian Writers. Canon Project
  - president suggested members buy a designated book monthly and that they go to bookstores and libraries and pressure agencies to have these books available in order to make present Italian Canadian writers;
  - Joseph stated that through the Bulletin members have been alerted to new publications by our authors and that this practice should continue.

### 2. Thanks:

Joseph thanked Marino and the

executive for their support of the conference; conference acknowledgements (financial and service-in-kind supporters) were mentioned.

**ACTION:** official thank you letters by Joseph will be sent.

### 3. Treasurer's Report: (C. Sotiriadis)

- the two year financial statement was presented with changes (see page 6)
- the current membership list was presented
- the address list was to be updated by members present.

### **MOTION:**

that the treasurer's report be accepted as changed. Filippo Salvatore/D'Alfonso *Carried*

### **DISCUSSION:**

*How to attract more members? More money?*

Attract students by departments at universities.

This topic needs to be revisited by the executive and the provincial reps.

### 4. Newsletter: (Marino Tuzi)

- Marino Tuzi had received \$1,000 from the treasurer for the BOLLETTINO
- From January 1, 1995 - October 26, 1996 the expenses totalled \$626.40 (duplication, postage and distribution)
- suggestions were made regarding a more reader friendly format; **ACTION:** Caterina will find someone who has desktop skills to do the final format.
- A Website to provide immediacy of information and publicity for the association should be considered. Marino indicated this item interested him and he would look into it.



Association of Italian-Canadian Writers  
Financial Accounting  
October 27, 1994 to October 15, 1996

DATE	ITEM	DEBIT	CREDIT	BALANCE
October 27	dues transfer old acct - Joseph close Vanc acct - Gerni dues interest service charge		25.00 2,205.00 55.07 245.00 0.23	25.00
December 30		1.90		2,348.40
1995				
January	dues interest foreign exchange transfer - Marino	1,000.00	1,145.00 8.61 7.67	
December 30				2,509.68
1996				
January	dues interest office expenses: stamps, phone/fax, envelopes, stickers transfer - Joseph, conference	246.40 2,000.00	1,175.00 6.12	
October 15				1,444.48

5. Conference Report: (Joseph Pivato)

Conference Revenues:

AICW	2,000
Cnd Heritage	7,500
Mariano Elia	500
Canada Council	1,600
	\$ 11,600

An attempt was made for various venues to be used and to join with other authors (of colour.) Joseph spoke of the difficulties and cooperation of organizing a conference at a distance. He believes that the conference will break even; all the authors will hopefully get a small reading fee; \$1,000 will go back to association.

**MOTION:** that the accounting of the Toronto 1996 conference be accepted as presented. Marino Tuzi/Antonino Mazza. *Carried*

6. Executive Elections: (Francesco Loriggio)

Francesco Loriggio acted as returning officer: responsible for the Nominating and Voting procedures.

1996 -1998 :

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*Secretary/Treasurer:*

Caterina (Bueti) Sotiriadis

*Bulletin Editor:*

Marino Tuzi

*Regional Representatives:*

(To assist the editor)

Filippo Salvatore - Quebec

Antonino Mazza - Ontario

Caterina Edwards - Prairies and B.C.

**SUGGESTIONS:**

- 1) To facilitate the receiving of information by the editor, he should provide deadlines, for example, June and Dec (?)
- 2) There should be a small amount of money set aside for phone/fax for provincial reps.
- 3) Should the regional representatives be part of the executive? Regional reps are encouraged to have in-put re: policy, etc. The current executive would discuss this item as soon as possible.

Discussion ensued regarding greater communication/ information between members.

**MOTION:** that 1 day be allocated at the next conference to discuss and develop structure and policy for the Association. Antonio Mazza/Caterina Edwards. *Carried*

7. Future Conference Plans: (Pasquale Verdicchio)

- tentatively Vancouver Oct. 1998
- 2 venues have already been discussed; the Italian Institute Cultural (Downtown), and another
- Pasquale could chair or co-chair the conference

**MOTION:** that Pasquale V. organize the 1998 conference in Vancouver and he solicit in-put from membership to arrive at conference themes. Joe Pivato/Marino Tuzi. *Carried*

8. Other:

Suggestions:

- that we meet every year;
- a committee was struck for a meeting on a yearly basis of a workshop nature for 1997- Licia Canton, Pasquale Verdicchio, Domenic Canton, Marino Tuzi would be on the organizing team. They would report back to the executive as to how all is progressing.
- that people be hired to do readings by authors at conferences. Authors can indicate who he/she wants to read his/her works.
- that the other items such as incorporation, fundraising, constitution, etc. be dealt through E-mail by the executive and that decision/discussion be reported in the Bollettino.

Meeting adjourned at 6:40 P.M. so that members could attend the readings to be performed by the women authors.

Caterina M. Sotiriadis, secretary

Ideas and Thoughts  
Are Always  
Welcome



Vos idées et vos pensées  
sont toujours  
les bienvenues



Le vostre idee et  
suggerimenti sono sempre  
benvenuti.

### 1998 Conference :



Pasquale Verdicchio, the president of the Association, will host the next Conference in Vancouver in October of 1998. No doubt, like Joseph Pivato, who organized, the 1996 Conference in Toronto, Pasquale Verdicchio will bring his own unique vision and style to the project.

What happened in Toronto this past fall was a reflection of the collective will of the Association, a will which was fuelled and facilitated by the superb work that Joseph Pivato did in organizing the Conference. By all accounts, the Conference was well structured and the events were well chosen. Even the sometimes long distance travelled between venues, the many events that made the day and the evening move so quickly, and the public transportation shutdown in downtown Toronto (as a part of the political response to the Harris government in Ontario) did not dampen the spirits or energy of the participants. Every person in attendance or who participated in the Conference in his/her way added value and quality to the events. This was indeed a fine moment for the Association of Italian Canadian Writers.

Like other individuals at the Conference, I had a wonderful time.



### Manitoba Report

A big "bello" from the Western Front. How do you like the new look of the Bollettino? We would appreciate your comments. I have asked one of our secretaries, Jeannette Perrin-Lévesque, to perform some of her technological magic and "ecco" . . . a new format has appeared. And since all writers enjoy positive criticism . . . share your thoughts with us.

Winnipeg has been a beehive of activity these past few months. Carmine Coppola, who had presented at the 1994 AICW conference in Winnipeg, has published a new book of poetry in Italian, entitled *Poesie per Giulia* which has been translated into English as *Poems for Julia* by Saveria Torquato also of Winnipeg. It was published by the Manitoba Italian Heritage Committee. The launch which was held at the Manitoba Planetarium Auditorium on November 10th was called "Al di là". Carmine had also written several of the songs that were performed that evening by some of our excellent local Italian talent.

A new face on the writing horizon in Winnipeg is Anna Zurzolo who has recently had her book *Pane Pane e Vino Vino* accepted for publication by the Manitoba company Turnstone Press. Look for this enchanting book in May 1997.

Mary Di Michele of Toronto/Montreal came to perform some of her wonderful poetry at two local venues on November 22 and 23 at Heaven Art and Book Café and Sunstone Café. What a send-off Manitoba provided - its first blizzard of the year! After shovelling for 2 ½ hours, we got Mary to the plane on time. We maybe the snow capital of Canada, but we are "Friendly Manitobans".

Vi auguro un "Caloroso e Felicissimo Anno Nuovo". Ciao Caterina



## New Publications

### BOOKS:



#### Fiction, Poetry, Drama:

##### *In Evil Eye and Other Stories.*

Anthony M. Buzzelli explores various themes in Italian Canadian experience, such as cultural and social marginalization, the clash of world views, and the search for meaning and place. To order call 1-905-335-6172 (business) or 1-905-335-2321 (fax).

In *Vinnie and Me*, published by Guernica Editions, Fiorella De Luca Calce explores territory that is similar to that in her previous novel. In this latest work, however, she pushes her concerns further. This is demonstrated in the convergence of such themes as adolescent angst and sexuality, family breakdown, the pressure of assimilation, and the fluidity and complexity of gender and ethnic identity. Written in a simple and unadorned style which has a constant edge to it, the novel is accessible and pertinent to many age levels.

In *Women As Lovers*, Guernica Editions, Theresa Carilli presents two plays which look at the ordinary but complex lives of Italian American lesbian women. The plays are riven with satire, pathos, and show an ear for everyday speech. These plays combine aspects of lesbian culture in America with the social patterns and attitudes of contemporary Italian Americans, as well as the world of popular culture.

Rachel Guido DeVries' poetry, *How To Sing To A Dago*, Guernica Editions, is a contemplation and exploration of love and intimacy among Italian American lesbian women. Public and private life fold into themselves in this lyrical and at times very direct look at sexuality, individual experience, femininity, and ethnicity.

Mary Melfi examines the reversal of roles, in which a therapist becomes the patient and a patient becomes the therapist, in her satirical dramatization of desire and sexuality. *Sex Therapy. A Play*, Guernica Editions, like other work by Mary Melfi, brings together a variety of elements: the anxieties of modern life, the urgencies of early middle age, the dilemmas of modern womanhood; and the textures and feelings of living in Italian and Canadian culture. These elements are shot through with Melfi's wit, bouts of black humour. In her own way, she celebrates the absurdities of contemporary human existence.

Guernica Editions has put on the printed page the screenplay of Paul Tana's highly acclaimed film, *Sarrasine*, which was released theatrically to a national audience and shown on the CBC. *Sarrasine* is a stirring story (based on a historical incident) of cultural and gender conflict, discrimination, injustice, and real politics in turn of the century Quebec. The publication of the screenplay moves the story onto the literary plane and continues in a different way to demonstrate its richness and power.

#### Literary and Cultural Studies:

*In Italics*, by Antonio D'Alfonso, Guernica Editions, brings together in a new form and with a new sense of focus Antonio D'Alfonso's concern with the politics of the publishing industry in Canada; the issues that arise range from who gets published and funded to who gains legitimacy from literary reviews. At the same time this critically important book of essays, which gives the reader a coherent view of writing and ethnicity in Canada, explores the cultural, ideological, and philosophical nature of ethnicity in Canada and in other countries, centring on the experience of Italians. *In Italics* is at once a political, artistic, and cultural polemic, a tenacious and superbly argued analysis of the nature of Italian

Canadian writing, an overview of the evolution of Italian writing in Canada, the United States, and in other countries, and an exploration of the significance of ethnicity in constructing a new literary aesthetic and imaginary.

*Social Pluralism and Literary History*, Guernica Editions, edited by Francesco Loriggio, is a collection of essays which ventures into the realm of minority writing in Canada and elsewhere. Although it is devoted to examining the work of writers of Italian origin in different parts of the world, outside of Italy, the book is a template for the critical and cultural study of minority literature in particular and writing in general, suggesting that the real risks and challenges are taken and faced by minority writers, such as Italians, in confronting the realities of contemporary life, realities which are bound by ethnicity, race, culture, and power politics.

Fred Gardaphe's book of essays on Italian American Literature, *Dagoes Read*, Guernica Editions, attempts to situate the literature in a specific tradition within American and minority writing. It also examines particular themes, forms, and typologies, asserting the uniqueness of the writing and its significant contribution to American literary tradition and activity. The book is informed by cultural studies, an eclectic and useful formalism, and literary theory.

By reprinting Richard Gambino's book, *Blood of My Blood: The Dilemma of the Italian Americans*, which was last published in 1974, Guernica Editions points to the fact that decades of Italian presence in America has not improved fundamentally the inferior treatment of Italians. The book examines the dynamics of Italian American culture and the problematic placement of Italians in American society. *Blood of My Blood* brings the study of history, culture, and society in its analysis of Italian American experience.

Guernica has also published other books of note:

*American Stories*, Short Stories by Pierre-Yves Pepin; *In Contro*, An Essay by Umberto Eco on the University and Mass Media; and *Othello's Sacrifice*, by John O'Hara, a romantic treatment of the Shakespearean play.

#### Magazines:

*The Eytalian*, a magazine devoted to things Italian in Canada, ranging from the arts to social life and lifestyle, has just published its 1996 winter issue. The lead piece is an interview with Italian American actor, Annabella Sciorra, who talks about her involvement in the latest film by Abel Ferrara, *The Funeral*. The interview is of interest not just in what it says about the production of the film. It is noteworthy for what it says about the attitude of Hollywood towards Italian American actors and about how Hollywood tends to portray, mostly stereotypically, Italian Americans. In this issue, there are also other interesting and entertaining essays and articles dealing with such topics as Italian folk lore, the popular resurgence of olive oil, and the Italian restaurant scene in Toronto. Nino Ricci, the star columnist, takes a satirical look at the banquet hall subculture in the Italian community, mixing a pop culture sensibility with cultural and social analysis.

#### Reviews:

Caterina Edwards' novel, *The Lion's Mouth*, was reviewed in the June 1995 issue of *Canadian Literature*. The review compared Caterina Edwards' work to that of Pietro di Donato, *Christ in Concrete*, considered a literary masterwork and a pioneer in Italian American writing.

*Surface Tension*, by Marisa De Franceschi, published by Guernica Editions, was reviewed in *Letters in*

Canada, 1994. The brief review provides a useful synopsis on the form, structure, and thematic patterns of the novel.

#### OTHER BOOKS OF INTEREST:

*A Dream Betrayed: The Battle for the CBC*, Tony Manera, Stoddart. Tony Manera, past head of the CBC and of Italian origin, looks at the downsizing of the CBC.

*Thinking Through: Essays on Feminism, Marxism, and Anti-Racism*, Himani Bannerji, Women's Press. The title of the book gives the reader a sense of its focus.

*A Place Called Heaven*, Cecil Foster, Random House. This book looks at the problems encountered by African Canadians in Canada.

*A Life on the Edge: Experiences in "Black and White" in North America*, by Wilson Head, published by the Dr. Wilson Head Institute. This autobiography has been published posthumously. It is a personal account of the life and times of a leading civil rights figure in the African American and African Canadian community.

*Clash of Identities: Essays on Media, Manipulation, and Politics of the Self*, edited by James Littleton, Prentice-Hall Canada. This collection of essays by such writers as Judy Rebick, Brian Maracle, and Haroon Siddiqui looks at race, ethnicity, power politics, and identity politics in Canada.



## Media Watch



Pasquale Verdicchio, AICW President, has initiated the idea of monitoring the representation of Italians in the media in Canada and the United States. So I thought we could get this important project going by citing a recent editorial comment in the Tues., Dec. 3, 1996 issue of *The Globe And Mail*.

The editorial was partly an analysis of the reasons why Dalton McGuinty won the leadership of the Ontario Liberal Party at its recent November Convention in Toronto. The editorial also examined the political future of McGuinty and that of the Ontario Liberal party. What is insightful, and perhaps startling, is the following observation made by *The Globe And Mail*, Canada's national and establishment newspaper, about Dalton McGuinty's surprising ascendancy to the post of party leader and his rivals' failure to do so.

Keep in mind that Joseph Cordiano, the Italian Canadian candidate, remained in second place, behind Gerrard Kennedy, during three ballots of voting, and always was ahead of McGuinty, until the fourth ballot, when McGuinty bypassed the frontrunner, Gerrard Kennedy, to win the leadership. (It was Cordiano who apparently put Dalton McGuinty over the top. However, before Cordiano decided to throw his support behind McGuinty in the fourth ballot, it is valuable to note that Annamaria Castrilli moved over to support McGuinty before the fourth ballot. I leave it for you, dear reader, to interpret the implication of this political act. Such is politics!)

Here is the quote: "Mr. McGuinty deftly positioned himself as Mr. Compromise. Mr. Kennedy was too left, Mr. Cordiano too ethnic (although no one would quite say it), Annamaria



Castrilli represented one woman following another as leader." (We must commend The Globe And Mail's perspicacity and frankness in dissecting this case study - the Ontario Leadership Convention - of contemporary politics in Canada. After all politics is really a reflection, at some level, of current economic realities and of prevailing social attitudes. While politics might frame the social and economic agenda, it also tends to follow it, as it appears often to be case today.)

I will leave it up to the reader to arrive at a final interpretation, to glean the meaning(s), and explore the significance of The Globe's observation. But it seems to me that what The Globe is suggesting is that Joseph Cordiano's ethnicity, the fact that he is an Ontarian and a Canadian of Italian origin, was not in his favour in a major party leadership convention in Canada. Remember that Metro Toronto and the rest of southern Ontario has the highest proportion of Italians in Canada. Therefore, it is not unusual to see Italian Canadians involved in the political process, as it is not unusual to see individuals of other cultural ancestry, like Gerrard Kennedy and Dalton McGuinty, involved in the political process in Ontario or in other parts of Canada.

The Globe And Mail observed that Joseph Cordiano was perceived to be "too ethnic" to win the leadership of the Ontario Liberals and by implication that he was perceived to be "too ethnic" from a public relations angle to run for the premiership of the Ontario government. Also Annamarie Castrilli was considered to be "one woman following another as leader" and, therefore, was discounted as a serious candidate for the leadership. (Of course, what The Globe And Mail leaves unstated is that Annamaria Castrilli's ethnicity, like that of Joseph

Cordiano, could not have been working in her favour at the convention.) The Globe And Mail's observation about ethnicity and politics and the politics of ethnicity is a telling reminder of the existence of a particular kind of public perception of Italians in Canada: Italians are ethnic as opposed to being "real" Canadians.

This is not to imply that this negative view is universally shared or acted upon (because one must admit, or least this has been my experience, that this attitude is not publicly, officially, and frequently expressed) by particular members of the general public. But it does force some of us, Canadians of Italian origin, to reflect soberly for a moment or two on how we are viewed at times, perhaps even by a small minority of people, because our origins lie elsewhere, not in the United Kingdom or France, but in that grand and ancient peninsula and in that lyrical island adorning the Mediterranean, that place called Italia.

-editor

## Letters to the Editor



I have included in the Newsletter input from members and interested parties. As you will see, the input varies in tone and purpose, but each writer in her or his own way has something pertinent to say to us.

I would like to start off with Joseph Ranieri's irreverent and joyful look at the Conference and some of its attendees.

## AGENDA-LEGGENDO

ANTONIO MAZZA. 101 newsletters were sent out.

He stood 102. Honorary member would be in that too.

MARY DI MICHELE. Piano, piano, piano, pianissimo.

JOE PIVATO. No conference in the south.

JOE MAVIGLIA. Bravissimo at the club, assente al microfono e sempre in ritardo.

CATERINA EDWARDS. Patient and regards, Ottawa and... \$\$\$ by CATERINA SOTIRIADIS.

PENNY PETRONE. I'll learn Your English, si impari il mio italiano.

GIUSEPPE RANIERI. Free copies for all, few pennies to roll.

PASQUALE VERDICCHIO. Here and there but where?

GIOVANNI COSTA. "Nel mezzo del cammin" dell'aeroporto.

ANTONIO D'ALFONZO. En hiver, in estate, in the autumn, a primavera... and then publishing goes on.

NINO RICCI. He appears e sparisce in italiano.

FILIPPO SALVATORE. Ma, que, mais che, what?

FRANK PACI. Non so, I went out... and You what?

MARISA DE FRANCESCHI. Ricordo ma non ti ricordo.

LICIA CANTON. Translation, translating, which last name.

GIOVANNI FAINELLA. Rappa, rappa se non ti scappa.

MARINO TUZI. A word of a thousand letters.

AND FOR ALL THE OTHER WRITERS. For equality and respect, Vatican City translates the "Our Father" into "La Nostra Madre". Brave.

(The above is an imaginary poem. © 1996 Giuseppe Ranieri. Poesia immaginaria.)

Next is Giovanni Costa's perception of and response to the Conference:

14 novembre 1996

Carissimo Joe,

Non so come ringraziarti del nobile gesto altrettanto generoso quante l'accoglienza tua e quella dei colleghi, animata da entusiasmo e sentimenti sinceri d'amici zia. Non potro mai dimenticare questo incontro a Toronto che è stato diversificato quanto fruttuoso per le reazioni spontanee ai lavori e alle composizioni poetiche dei partecipanti. Questo mi dà piacere attira verso la nostra Associazione. Ci rivedremo a Vancouver, che amo tanto, con rinnovato piacere sperando di far conoscere la mia terza nuota raccolta di poesie, già fatte, ma da mettere ancora a punto.

Con il nuovo formato interessante della Conferenza ho avuto occasione di conoscere altri quartieri della Comunità italiana; per me è stata una nuova esperienza stimolante. Mi rincresce solo di non aver potuto assistere sino alla fine.

Bravo Joe! Bravo Marino! Bravo Pasquale! L'AICW!

Nel ringraziarti di nuovo, porgo i migliori saluti e un abbraccio fraterno a te e ai tuoi pregiati collaboratori. Ciao!

Giovanni

P.S. Mi auguro che la Nuova Autologia di scrittori italo-canadesi sia un progetto imminente. Contragolazioni!

C.C. Pasquale Verdicchio,  
presidente  
Marino Tuzi, direttore del  
Bollettino AICW

Also included in this part of the Bollettino is Patrizia Tavormina's letter to the Association and her announcement of a particular project that she is involved in.

November 24, 1996

Letter to the Association of Italian-Canadian Writers:

I am writing to express my thanks to the organizers of the Italian-Canadian Writer's Conference held in Toronto. I know that organizing on a national level with limited funding, takes manoeuvring, patience, and persistence. As a writer still familiarizing myself with the Italian-Canadian/American community of writers, conferences like this are essential and highly valued. These meetings are always inspirational, and I am honoured to have participated.

I am also glad to see that the conference and the association allows for a diversity of voices and welcomes critical discourse. It is both through supporting as well as challenging one another's work that we can expand our creativity and reach our greatest potential as writers. I am especially appreciative of this forum for dialogue, and genuinely thank the association for allowing the conference to be a place where such dialogue can happen.

The conference has existed for over twenty years, supporting established writers and encouraging new writers. This is an integral part of Italian-Canadian history, a part of my own history as an Italian-Canadian which I do not take for granted. Once again, thanks to everyone for their hard work. I am looking forward as

usual to the next conference in two years.

Sincerely,

Patrizia Tavormina

I also have included Anello Castrucci's invitation to the launch of his latest work. Although the launch has long passed, the details on his book are still very useful.

Ottawa, 25 settembre 1996

Cari amici,

ho il piacere di invitarvi tutti al lancio del nuovo volume suo "Monti Lepini: voci che tornano" appena pubblicato. La cerimonia avrà luogo domenica 6 ottobre, 1996, alle 14 e 30, presso la biblioteca di Villa Marconi, 1026 Baseline Road.

Il volume sarà presentato dal Prof. Leonardo G. Sbrocchi dell'Università di Ottawa.

Alla presentazione seguirà un rinfresco.

Per ulteriori informazioni telefonare al: 737-4292.

Con i più cordiali saluti,

Anello Castrucci





*MALA FEMMINA, STREGA, SORELLA, PAESANA, NOI DONNI*

**CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS  
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**FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL OR FAX US AT:**

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**DUE DATE: April 15, 1997.**

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Italian Women's Anthology  
Women's Press  
517 College St., #302  
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**MEMBERSHIP:**

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**ASSOCIATE / STUDENT:**

**\$25 CDN (no voting privileges)**

**MAIL TO:**

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*OR*

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From left to right: Mary Melfi, Caterina Sotiriadis, Filippo Salvatore, Marisa Di Franceschi (back).



Some of the smiling faces at the Toronto '96 Conference