



"PASSING THE TORCH"

COCCIA FOUNDATION

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Elda Coccia and Cav. Joseph Coccia, Jr.; Rina Miraglia (recipient of inaugural Coccia-Inserra Award for Excellence and Innovation in the Teaching of Italian K-12); Elisa Coccia (Vice President, Coccia Foundation); Dr. Anthony Tamburri (Dean, John D. Calandra Italian American Institute, Queens College); and Alexis Eckert (Principal, Ho-Ho-Kus Public School). Photo credit to Mike Peters

Inaugural Coccia-Inserra Award for Excellence and Innovation in the Teaching of Italian Presented at Teaching Italian Symposium

Written by Nancy Masterson-Newkirk,
MSU Development Communications & Marketing Coordinator

Cav. Joseph Coccia, Jr. and Lawrence R. Inserra, Jr. have established an annual prize to recognize an outstanding teacher of Italian at the K–12 level: the Coccia-Inserra Award for Excellence and Innovation in the Teaching of Italian (K–12). A ‘blue ribbon’ panel of experts selected Rina Miraglia, a middle-school Italian teacher at Ho-Ho-Kus Public School, as the first award recipient. She received \$1,000 for her school to be used to advance its Italian language and culture curriculum and programming. The award was presented on October 15, 2010, at a ceremony during the third annual Teaching Italian Symposium/Workshop that focused on “Technology: Getting with the Program.”

“The Coccia-Inserra Award is a unique and welcome acknowledgment of the contributions of Italian teachers, the ‘unsung heroes’, who are operating in an increasingly challenging and difficult context,” says Mary Ann Re, Director of the Joseph and Elda Coccia Institute for the Italian Experience in America. “Teachers at the K-12 level are critical to and essential for the development and encouragement of the ‘feeder pool’ of potential students of Italian at the college and university levels.”

Ms. Miraglia was a presenter at the Teaching Italian Symposium and received consistently excellent feedback from the participants, who were thrilled that she won the Coccia-Inserra Award. “What an unbelievable experience...,”

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Knowing Thyself, Working in Unison

A Successful Formula for Italian Studies in the United States

Anthony Julian Tamburri, Ph.D.,
Professor and Dean of the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute

On December 5, 2010, I sent out a message on the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute's list-serve. It was in reaction to a New York Times article that appeared that very day and spoke to the precarious state of affairs for western European languages. These two articles came on the wake of the success of re-instating the Advanced Placement Program in Italian by the College Board. It was a bit like a pail of cold water being



thrown at us for a number of reasons: first, we had just come off of a successful campaign; second, the threatening of Italian in particular remains most peculiar since there has been a constant increase in students studying Italian since 1969, when numbers were first registered (approx. 700% in these past forty-one years).

Italian continues to be one of the few languages registering growth, which makes the struggle to save programs and the re-instatement of the Advanced Placement Program in Italian all the more significant. We have come to realize, I would submit to you, that these past three years (the College Board threatened the eventual suspension of the AP in Italian in January 2008) have proven that only by collaborating as a community at large can we achieve any sort of success. Such re-instatement of the AP did in fact challenge the various Italian/American communities to raise three million dollars that would finance the future of the exam.

That 2009 campaign was initially coordinated and led by the Conference of Presidents of Major Italian American Organizations (COP). The leadership of the COP, people need to know, was instrumental in getting negotiations back on track in early 2009. That leadership partnered with the American Society for the Italian Legions of Merit (ASILM), who together formed a working committee that helped re-launch talks with the College Board in September 2009. In October 2009, Giulio Terzi di Sant'Agata was named Italy's new Ambassador to the United States and immediately embraced the cause to re-instate the AP in Italian. I mention this only because, as a community, we need to know who all the so-called brokers were and, when we cross paths, thank them all for

The other organizations that fundraised and assisted in other ways included the American Association of Teachers of Italian (AATI), representatives of the University of Perugia for Foreigners, Coccia Foundation, the Columbus Citizens Foundation, the Italian Heritage and Culture Committee of New York, Italian Language Inter-Culture Alliance (ILICA), Italian Language Foundation, National Italian American Foundation (NIAF), National Organization of Italian American Women (NOIAW), Order Sons of Italy in America (OSIA), the Italian Consulate of New York and the Italian Embassy in DC, and others as well.

Two days later, another article appeared on *The World's* website (<http://www.theworld.org/2010/12/07/italian-language-learning-in-america>): "Is Italian finito in America." While the article is basically about the latest Italian food establishment in Manhattan, Eataly, it references the cultural tragedy of SUNY Albany. In so doing, the journalist writes:

The survival of a language in schools and colleges is mostly about money. It's also about confidence. If students can't be sure schools are committed to a language, they'll be unlikely to commit to it themselves. Still, Italian's not in danger of disappearing from American education. Almost 80 thousand high schoolers took the language in 2007/8, the most recent figures available. And don't forget, not all learners are in formal education.

What is stated above is true, the "survival of [Italian] is mostly about money," whether we like it or not. One reason for this may very well be that because, in the past, we as a community have not zeroed in on the language issue. Regardless of whether one speaks the language, s/he can always be a promoter of that language, if for any other reason than to be sure that those who follow do not suffer the consequences of "enemy alien" status when people in the United States (read also, young Italians), for example, were told not to speak the "enemy's language." And as a consequence, this form of Americanization of an entire generation of children and grandchildren of all immigrants sent one of the most damaging and patently xenophobic messages it could have to the progeny of all of those who risked their lives to cross the ocean at the turn of the twentieth century.

It was a message sent out to non-Italians as well. Italian was no longer a good language to know; it was the "enemy's language;" it was the language of immigrants; it

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Dott. Antonio Benetti, Dirigente Scolastico (Education Director), Consulate General of Italy in NY, standing in for Andrea Barbaria, Consul of Italy in Newark; Dr. Marisa Trubiano (Professor of Italian, MSU); Rina Miraglia (Award recipient, Ho-Ho-Kus Public School); Dr. Roberto Dolci (Associate Professor of Linguistics, Università per Stranieri di Perugia Tecnologie); Dr. Anthony Tamburri (Dean, John D. Calandra Italian American Institute, Queens College/CUNY); and Dr. Andrea Baldi, Chair- Department of Italian, Rutgers University), celebrate Ms. Miraglia's honor at receiving the inaugural Coccia-Inserra Award for Excellence and Innovation in the Teaching of Italian (K-12). Photo credit to Mike Peters

said one high school teacher; and another claims, "Rina è bravissima. Adesso sono ispirata a fare le cose meravigliose che fa lei!" Another wrote that "Rina's workshop was EXCELLENT!!!"

The Coccia-Inserra Award panel included experts from around the Metropolitan area: Dr. Anthony Julian Tamburri, Professor and Dean of the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute at Queens College, CUNY; The Consul of Italy in Newark, Andrea Barbaria; Dr. Andrea Baldi, Chair of the Department of Italian at Rutgers University/New Brunswick; Dr. Roberto Dolci, Associate Professor of Linguistics, Università per Stranieri di Perugia Tecnologie; and Dr. Marisa Trubiano, Professor of Italian at Montclair State University. Ho-Ho-Kus Public School principal Alexis Eckert also attended the ceremony.

The second annual Coccia-Inserra Award will be presented on October 21, 2011, at Teaching Italian IV. The 2011 award process is open to all teachers of Italian at the K-12 level who are members of any recognized professional association of Italian language teachers.

The Teaching Italian symposia and workshops are the signature professional development collaboration between the Coccia Institute and MSU's Department of

Spanish and Italian. The program was sponsored in part by Ferrero U.S.A., Inc.

"Technology: Getting with the Program' provides wonderful professional development opportunities to an array of teachers of Italian," says Dr. Tamburri. "What is truly unique is its far-reaching vision in inviting both experts as well as participants from beyond the tri-state area. It is both this broad vision and top-notch expertise that make 'Technology: Getting with the Program' the model for future development workshops in other parts of the U.S.A. Bravi!"

Elementary, high school, and college instructors participating in this annual symposium are engaged in both methodological discussions and hands-on design to create pedagogically sound instructional materials using a myriad of technological tools to enhance language learning such as creating their own series of materials for immediate classroom use.

"Technology: Getting with the Program' was an exceptional event, surpassing all expectations," remarked Dr. Enza Antenos-Conforti, MSU Professor of Italian, Teacher Education Coordinator and Chair of the symposium's organizing committee. "The continued collaboration and support of the Institute and the Department, the enthusiastic participation of teachers of Italian in the tri-state area, the unparalleled expertise of speakers and workshop hosts, and the dedication of the organizing committee have all contributed significantly to the success of this series. These programs have given Montclair State University a visible role in the area of professional development of teachers of Italian."

Specialists in Instructional Technology in Foreign Language Teaching presenting at the symposium included: Julia Cozzarelli, Ithaca College; Chiara Dal Martello, Arizona State University; Michael Heller, Montclair State University; Rina Miraglia, Ho-Ho-Kus Public School; and James Pfrehm, Ithaca College.

Victoria Buchner, Student-Volunteer and President of the Amici della Cultura Italiana Club at MSU, said, "It is always a wonderful opportunity for the Amici members to be invited for behind-the-scenes work as well as full participation in the symposium."

"The College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Montclair State University is pleased that the Coccia Institute for the Italian Experience in America has partnered with Italian language professionals to provide instructional development opportunities for high school and college teachers of Italian," adds Dean Marietta Morrissey. "The excellent annual workshops have given instructors from throughout the state the opportunity to share innovative technological and other methods of enhancing the teaching of Italian language and culture. To see teachers so engaged is just humbling."

was also good for getting a good seat in an Italian restaurant, or for dealing with bootleggers, as Luigi Barzini, Jr. writes in his autobiography (*O America, When You and I Were Young*), when he recounts his American girl-friend's mother's little speech to him before they set foot on land in New York:

“Luigi,” her mother asked in a mellifluous voice, “you like Natalie?” I merely nodded enthusiastically but respectfully, as I could not speak. “Natalie likes you?” she went on. I modestly adopted a questioning look and waited. “I hope you speak Italian with her sometimes. She must get some practice. *Italian is very useful in New York, don't you know, particularly with bootleggers and headwaiters in good restaurants. They give you a better table if you speak their language.* They say that some people who know Italian can even understand the words of an opera and follow the plot, not that that makes much difference....” I found the strength to assure her I often spoke Italian with Natalie. I promised I would speak more, although it was more vital for me to fortify my English.

She continued: “I love your language. I don't understand it, but it is so musical. It is the language of love.... There's nothing more charming than a shipboard flirtation like yours. You're only young once, I always say. But there is one thing I must absolutely tell you. When we're in New York, do not try to see Natalie again. She has plenty of beaux. You won't like it. *And my husband, her father, disapproves of Italians. He dislikes having them around the house. They make him nervous. Italians, he says, are all right in Italy but even there he thinks there are far too many of them.* So promise me not to call or write. You understand, don't you?” (*O America, When You and I Were Young* [New York: Harper & Row, 1977] 135-6; my emphasis).

Italian was, basically, considered an ethnic language, for sure—good even, as “[t]hey say,” to “understand the words of an opera and follow the plot, not that that makes much difference.” It was a language for fun, to provide one with “divertimento,” as we might ambiguously state in Italian: entertainment on the one hand, and diversion on the other. But, in the end, it was a language of people who “make [others] nervous” and who are, in addition, “*far too many.*” This, of course, we know to be patently false! It is a language of culture, of world culture, and we must underscore this message whenever possible.

Our responsibility at this juncture is thus to ensure that the value of Italian is more than an ethnic language, more useful than for getting good seats in restaurants. Precisely because of the value of our Italian legacy, we need to be sure that Italian is available to all those who wish to study it. One thing we do know is that enrollments in Italian have increased significantly in these past twenty years.

We need to invest the same energies in this new campaign of not only saving Italian courses and programs, as we are being told today in the media. But we need to be better informed citizens of Italian America and more knowledgeable about our culture so we can make the convincing argument that Italian should indeed be taught because of its more than 800 years of culture, philosophy, science, and the arts. And the success of such actions lies squarely with us, both the Italian/American community and all those who love things Italian. We need to support our own activities, which means attending lectures that, in the end, truly do lead us toward a greater completeness of knowledge of our culture. We need to respond with courteous yet firm indignation when—whether it be at a social event or business meeting—someone makes an offensive comment about Italians or Italian Americans in his/her feeble attempt to make a joke.

We also need to do so for the teaching of Italian language and culture; we need to hold workshops around the country in order to hone further the quality of our teaching of the language, a job we have obviously been doing very well given the dramatic increases in enrollments over the years. But this further investigation into different and more productive measures for teaching Italian is exactly what the Joseph and Elda Coccia Institute for the Italian Experience in America embarked upon three years ago with the inaugural “Teaching Italian Symposium. Meeting I: Speaking” of 2008. While the workshop was aimed primarily at teachers from New Jersey, the Institute had gathered a national team of internationally renowned teachers of Italian language and culture. They explored teaching oral skills through a variety of ways that included various exercises students could perform individually, to how they can work in a group, to how they can work with various media.

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The 2009 edition of the symposium was dedicated to writing (“Teaching Italian Symposium. Meeting II: Writing”). Here, too, the Institute gathered an equally impressive team of leaders, both local and national, who worked with teachers from the tri-state area. Indeed, this type of synergy is emblematic of what we should be doing on a greater scale, working together and collaborating for the realization of the final goal, in this case the delivery of a subject matter in its most productive channels possible. This is, in fact, what we did as a community for the reinstatement of the AP in Italian; we worked as a team.

This year’s symposium, “Teaching Italian Symposium. Meeting III: Technology, ‘Getting with the Program,’” raised the bar even higher. In addressing additional needs for enhancing further still the teaching (and thus learning) of Italian, this workshop proved to be more broad-reaching than before, building nicely indeed on the previous two workshops. In this third year, we found an even greater interest in who wanted to attend the workshop. No longer just the locals, but indeed people coming from beyond the tri-state area. And this should be, for sure, one of our goals, to create an even greater network of professional competencies in language teaching.

This third year also inaugurated the Coccia-Inserra Award for Excellence and Innovation in the Teaching of Italian (K–12). This year’s award went to Rina Miraglia, an Italian teacher at Ho-Ho-Kus Public School. Her \$1,000 is to be used to advance its Italian language and culture curriculum and programming. For this we need to thank both Cav. Joseph Coccia, Jr. and Lawrence R. Inserra, Jr., who have clearly exhibited their awareness of the necessity of both recognizing and supporting, in the Renaissance notion of patronage, the teaching of Italian language and culture.

Patronage, in fact, is at the base of the Coccia Foundation’s The Amici Student Groups, that, as we read on the Foundation’s website, is “a growing network of Italian clubs, representing numerous colleges and universities around the country, who have the opportunity to communicate and coordinate with each other through the Coccia Foundation.” This is both patronage and network-making in one stroke, so to speak. The Coccias have clearly looked back to that wonderful practice that was Renaissance patronage and brought it into the twenty-first century, guaranteeing a synergy at the national level among college students with a passion for all things Italian.

All of these actions and collaborations mentioned above is what we need to expand, from the local to the global. The Joseph and Elda Coccia Institute for the Italian Experience in America at Montclair State University and the independent Coccia Foundation have offered what can only be an excellent model to emulate. Only in this sense can we engage in a more productive and greater degree of a cultural and ethnic discourse, one that clearly surpasses those ethnic boundaries of social events; it is simply not enough for any of us, private or elected individuals, to proclaim our Italian pride at Italian events. We need to do so at events and in venues that are *not* Italian and Italian/American. We need to uphold the value of our Italian heritage and legacy in its various and multifaceted manifestations and articulations in these venues precisely because, for instance:

- (1) what we know today as “modernity” has its origins in the Italian Renaissance;
- (2) what we know as “philanthropy” today has its roots in the Italian Renaissance practice of patronage;
- (3) what we know today as the United States legal system has its roots in an eighteenth-century Italian legal philosopher, Cesare Beccaria;
- (4) what we know of the art world today is that more than sixty-percent of the world’s production is Italian in origin;
- (5) what we know of United States contemporary literature is that some of our best-selling authors are David Baldacci, Rita Ciresi, Don DeLillo, Lisa Scotoline, and Adriana Trigiani, to name a few.

Here at the Calandra Institute (Queens College, CUNY), we have and shall continue to partner with all of the associations and organizations mentioned at the outset. Together with them and the Joseph and Elda Coccia Institute for the Italian Experience in America and the Coccia Foundation will we be able to insure that Italian and Italian/American history and culture, as well as the Italian language, do not fall by the wayside because of decisions made by bureaucrats and functionaries grounded only in what they perceive as the latest notions of what is solely “utilitarian” when it comes to the knowledge and linguistic competency of a second language and the culture that it represents.

Alla riscossa per poter andare sempre avanti,

Anthony Julian Tamburri, Ph.D.
Professor and Dean of the Calandra Institute



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Sponsored scholarships, of a minimum of \$2,000 annually, are for students of all ethnic backgrounds whose futures are dedicated to obtaining Masters and/or Doctorate degrees, with the intention of pursuing a career in teaching Italian.

To join or request additional information, kindly call Joseph at 201-712-1010.



2010 Mario Lanza Scholarship Recipient
Julian Arsenault, presented by Elisa Coccia



Elda & Cav. Joseph Coccia, Jr. – Founders



Celebrating Our Heritage in Song and Dance

Coro d'Italia

Marylou Romano, Founder

This past October, the Coro d'Italia, Italian American Singing and Dancing Ensemble, of which I'm the director, celebrated Italian heritage month with a performance at historic Lambert Castle in Paterson, New Jersey. Our show, "Postcard's d'Italia", featured a wide array of music, and dances. It was a tour of Italy with dances from Sicily and Campania, songs from the Italian cinema, and even some popular Italian American tunes. Two aspects of this show were especially unique. We presented a formal exhibit of some of the costumes made for Coro members through the years and used this show as an opportunity to thank the Coccia family for their encouragement and support through the years.

Our MVPs —The Coccia Family!

Each year, we pay tribute to someone who has done something special for the Coro. This year, the Coccia family was our "MVPS" or "Most Valuable Paesani" for 2010. Years ago, when we brought the Coro to New Jersey, many people cautioned me that no one in the Italian Community would help us; I found that this was not so. Mr. and Mrs. Coccia have always supported us by attending our activities, and on occasion they have slipped me an envelope, "la bosta" —most appreciated and especially valued as we never even asked them. It was just something they did because they believed in us. This, to my mind, is the very best kind of a gift, from one Peasano to another. To honor him and his family, one of our members, Angelo Vaglio, wrote them a song, "Vlase De Grazie" or "Waltz of Thanks." To see and hear this played by Angelo on vibes and Daniella Fischetti on violin, visit YouTube.

Traditional Italian Dress Exhibit

Lambert Castle, the setting for this year's show, was magical. A mansion built by a silk merchant more than a hundred years ago, it sits on a hill that overlooks eastern New Jersey toward the skyline of Manhattan. Director of the Passaic Historical Society, Alison Faubert, was gracious enough to invite me to set up our costume exhibit in one of their spectacular galleries. The collection is culled from the costume closet of the Coro d'Italia. Members of the Coro are encouraged to wear a costume from the town, province, or region of their choice. For years, members have gone to **the book, *Il Costume Popolare in Italia***, by Emma Calderini (1936), to choose a costume. The majority of the costumes are handmade, without a pattern by a mother or aunt of a Coro performer. Many hours were spent hand embroidering the details, and the costumes were worn with much pride during concerts. As time has progressed, some of the original costumes have been retired into this collection for safe keeping, although they are still occasionally worn for special performances.

About the Coro d'Italia

The Coro d'Italia was founded in 1932 by educator, Dr. Leonard Covello, and student, Elba Farabegoli, at the Casa Italia of Columbia University. They researched songs, dances, and costumes and performed in the New York Metropolitan Area for nearly seventy years. The ensemble performed at the NYC World's Fair in 1939, Carnegie Hall, Town Hall, and many other venues. For nearly 80 years, the Coro was the voice of Italians in New York City and beyond. The repertoire includes songs from all regions of Italy, and Metropolitan opera stars performed regularly with the Coro. The Coro d'Italia is acknowledged as the first ensemble dedicated solely to Italian material in America. Cav. Farabegoli Gurzau went on to found IFafa, Italian Folk Arts Federation of America. Her work has helped to spread Italian traditions throughout America, where similar ensembles have been formed, from Massachusetts to Illinois and from Texas to California.

Upcoming Activities

The Bambini d'Italia Language and Culture Classes for spring 2011 will begin February 17. The classes are held at the Holy Family Parish Center in Nutley, New Jersey. Students from preschool age through age eight will enjoy learning Italian language basics through poetry, games, and songs.

The Coro d'Italia Singing and Dancing Ensemble will begin rehearsals for their 79th season this spring. The ensemble is made up of both professional performers and talented community volunteers. The troupe welcomes inquiries for new members. If you like to sing and/or dance and love all things Italian, please contact us at (973)461-9624 email: ditalianj@yahoo.com or visit our website: www.ditaliaprograms.org.



D'ITALIA Programs: Passing Down Our Traditions

Marylou Romano, Founder

Growing up in Northern New Jersey as a little red headed Italian-American girl, I was exceptionally proud of my heritage, but there was much more I wanted to know. I remember asking my maternal grandfather about his life in Italy. He would tell me a little but seemed uncomfortable. Was it that he missed it so much, or was it too painful to talk about? Did he deem it unimportant now that we were all Americans, or did he doubt my true interest in an old story from “the other side”? Nevertheless, I felt a keen yearning to learn more about my grandparent’s story. This interest has led me into a host of activities that, as an adult, have enriched my life many times over. I have benefitted from many older people who have taken the time to teach me and tell me their stories. Because of them, we are sharing our rich cultural heritage with the next generation and with our communities.

TARANTELLA ANYONE?



In 1994, my twin sister Joanna and I had the good fortune to come across a rehearsal of the Coro d'Italia in midtown Manhattan. The Coro d'Italia (Italian Folklore Society) is a singing and dancing ensemble that began in New York City by renowned educator, Dr. Leonard Covello, and one of his students, Elba Farabegoli Gurzau. Founded in 1932, it is one of the oldest ensembles in America. We were immediately impressed with their lovely songs, beautiful costumes, and charming dances. We became members and performed with them in New York City. Back in our home state, New Jersey, we were asked to share our knowledge of traditional music and dance at schools, feasts, cultural events, and even weddings. As the majority of the original Coro members had retired, we moved the Coro d'Italia from Manhattan to New Jersey to rebuild the membership and perform annual concerts. This past October, we had our Seventy Fourth Annual Concert, Tradizioni d'Italia in Leir Hall at Montclair Art Museum. In the future, this museum will feature our traditional music, folk dancing, regional costuming, opera, and our Mueso D'Italia exhibit.

I RAGAZZI!

Gradually, our pride in heritage and concern for stereotyping came together to present a program that would help to tell our true Italian American story. In 1997, with the help of the Center for Italian and Italian American Culture, the New Jersey State Council of the Arts, and the National Italian American Foundation, we began the Scuola d'Italia, (Italian School). We believed offering a cultural enrichment program for children, a program to act as an initial starting point, we could reach out to our scattered community to bring people together to discover aspects of our heritage for ourselves, learn from each other, and celebrate our uniqueness!

We now offer two programs for children — the Scuola d'Italia and Bambini d'Italia. Both consist of language lessons, taught by professional instructors, many of them native born. The Scuola is an after school cultural enrichment program, and the Bambini is a performing ensemble, the children’s counterpart of the Coro d'Italia. Originally just for children, we added an adult language class as family members expressed an interest in learning the Italian language as well. We also encourage grandparents and senior members of the community to share their knowledge of customs with us.

So much of who we are as Italian Americans revolves around family. We are as much tied to those who came before us as to those who we share our lives with now. I often think of my grandpa and the questions I asked him. Many of these have been answered thanks to the Coro d'Italia.

For additional information about the D'Italia programs please contact Marylou “Mariuccia” Romano at (973) 744-7653, or email: ditalianj@yahoo.com. Visit our website: www.ditalia.org.



AMICI della Cultura Italiana Participating Universities & Colleges

New Jersey / New York Region

Montclair State University



From left to right: Cav. Joseph Coccia, Jr.; Rudy Valli, Chair, Adv. Board, Coccia Institute; Victoria Buchner, President, MSU AMICI; Barbara Carbon, Faculty Advisor, MSU AMICI; and Phil Sergio, Student Liaison, Coccia Foundation



From left to right: Dr. Constantine Theodosiou, Dr. Susan Cole, President of MSU, and Professor Eugenio Coccia

Montclair State University's AMICI Club enjoys of a unique advantage: the proximity with the Coccia Institute, which is located in the same building as the Department of Italian. Consequently, our AMICI members are aware of all organized cultural events sponsored by the Coccia Institute and Coccia Foundation, and they take an active part in all of them. This enriches the programs of the MSU AMICI Club and the Italian cultural awareness of every single member. To mention just a few recent examples, the Coccia Foundation and Coccia Institute organized a lecture by Ambassador Giulio Terzi about the perspective of Italy inside the United Nations, a scientific conference by Doctor Eugenio Coccia about Galileo Galilei, a musical performance about Rossini's opera *La scala di seta*, and various book presentations led by their authors ranging from history, Italian immigration, literature and Italian American pop culture. Our AMICI members have always been involved in the practical management of all these events (registration, setting tables, serving refreshments, taking pictures, cleaning up, etc.). I believe that as active organizers, the AMICI members have the exceptional opportunity to gain knowledge about this broad range of topics they would not learn otherwise.

I feel that the reciprocal exchange between the Coccia Foundation and the AMICI Club at Montclair State University is very beneficial for both sides because each part takes and gives. Without the assistance and volunteering of the AMICI members, these events would be more expensive and difficult to manage. On the other side, without the Coccia Foundation's cultural input, the AMICI Club would not continue growing in "bellezza e saggezza" (beauty and wisdom). It is not through bake sales and "scopa" tournaments that the AMICI clubs achieve the goal of "passing the torch" and preserving the Italian culture: rather, it is through the individual growth of each member as they become aware of the various aspects which Italian culture presents.

For this important educational role, we thank the Coccia Foundation and the Coccia Institute immensely.

Professor Barbara Carbon
Faculty Advisor, AMICI Club

Farleigh Dickinson University (Madison & Teaneck Campuses)



During the last five years, Fairleigh Dickinson University students have benefited immeasurably from the vision, generosity, and commitment of Cavaliere Joseph Coccia, his wife Elda and their foundation. Our university was one of the first schools involved in Cav. Coccia's admirable proposal to actively promote Italian culture on college campuses through the support of Italian clubs and organizations. The students at FDU felt honored to be included in this group and enthusiastically embraced the challenges and ideas set forth by Cav. Coccia. One of the Foundation's means to achieve its goals was to award grants for study abroad so that students would have the opportunity to come face to face with the many aspects of Italian culture. In the summer of 2006, Mynda D'Andrea and Sabino Sellitto, active members and officers of our Italian club, became the first two FDU recipients of the Foundation's grants. That summer, as co-directors of the abroad program, my husband Angelo and I saw the joy and appreciation of the students as we made our way from the Roman Forum to the Uffizi museum to the steep

paths of the Cinque Terre. Much has happened since then. An Italian club was revived on our Teaneck campus, the AMICI group was formed and provides an invaluable student club network, and an additional seven FDU students have been awarded Coccia Foundation Grants to study with the FDU Study Abroad Program in Italy now directed by Prof. Gloria Pastorino. Throughout this evolution, the Coccia Foundation's support has remained steadfast and has continued to enrich indelibly the lives of FDU students.

Professor Josephine Spina
Faculty Advisor, AMICI Club

Ramapo College

All the cultural events and educational projects organized by the Amici della Cultura Italiana at Ramapo College are characterized by the participation of students, faculty, and the Italian-American community. It is through the union of these components that Italian culture becomes an essential part of the academic life, representing an open door towards new and exciting experiences and a way for everyone to enrich their knowledge. The Fall Semester of 2010 has been, for us, a stimulating period. Our students engaged with passion in various events that functioned both as moments of fun for the entire campus and as valuable occasions for spreading Italian culture and its message. We started the academic year with a Gelato tasting, where students could learn how to prepare a gelato and its importance in the culinary habits of Italians. We have also focused our attention on Italian Opera. In October, we hosted a wonderful "Lunch at the Opera" with the internationally acclaimed tenor Alejandro Olmedo, and in November, we organized a trip to the Metropolitan for a marvelous production of "La Bohème" by Giacomo Puccini. Our association frequently participates in various international events that are organized on campus. In particular, this year, we supported one of our Italian students, Giuliano Rizzola from Rome, for his lecture on Italian food and its interactions with culture and life style. Amici della Cultura Italiana is probably the most active club at Ramapo College, with a Conversation Hour that is held weekly and numerous occasions of encounters between students and faculty. The Coccia Foundation is, for us, always a source of inspiration. Thanks to its message of sharing values among generations and keeping tradition alive, the Coccia Foundation makes it possible for us to feel part of a larger community, opened to everyone, that guides us through a better understanding of our past and towards a bright future.

Rosetta D'Angelo, Ph.D.
Faculty Advisor, AMICI Club

Written by Giuseppe Sorrentino
Professor of Italian

St. Peter's College

The passing of the torch for La Gioventù Italiana has been conclusively realized thanks to the Coccia Foundation. When I came to Saint Peter's, the Italian Club had been inactive for a long time. One of my goals was to revive it. There were only twelve active members the first year. The participation began to increase immediately after we made a partnership with Mr. Coccia. The e-board met with the Coccia Foundation executives and with college representatives and helped the club develop into a more organized and prolific group. After that, we began attending more events such as the evening galas and a festa di Carnevale that Coccia Foundation organizes. What truly transformed the identity of La Gioventù Italiana, though, has been done thanks to an endowment that was granted for the proposal of a play. We proposed a play that would convey Italian immigration entwined with commedia dell'arte characters and references to recent American and Italian history. This was combined with a minstrel-themed party to highlight the evening. Although the proposal was daring, it was still embraced by the Coccia Foundation. The production of this play was educational for the students as well as for me. None of us had had any experiences in theatrical enterprises, and the opportunity to contribute to the making of a performance first hand was a fruitful experience. The play brought to life many forgotten aspects of Italian culture and history. Most of all, it breathed life into the entire Italian community and established a sense of a merged identity. This experience is all merited to the Coccia Foundation, and we were delighted to partake in this event with them..



Without the help of the Coccia Foundation, we would not be able to even consider promoting a second theater performance this year. However, Mr. Coccia gave the club and myself the confidence to further pursue these entreaties. Because of this Foundation, we have formed a cohesive Italian Club. Many members, colleagues, administrators, students, and parents have enjoyed the possibilities of Italian creative legacy. We would like to sincerely thank the Coccia Foundation.

Maria Luisa Graziano, Ph.D.
Faculty Advisor, AMICI Club

New Jersey Institute of Technology

The AMICI della Cultura Italiana, supported by Coccia Foundation, helps unite, strengthen, and form new relationships among college students from various backgrounds, especially at the New Jersey's Science & Technology University. All of the student members share a common ground and are involved in developing an Italian culture interest Club or Group. It is with the support of the AMICI Groups and the Coccia Foundation that help us preserve and maintain the Italian culture interests and culture background in the future generations.

By bringing NJIT students together, we begin to share ideas and help one another improve our Italia club through true understanding of the Italian culture. These ideas come into effect by strengthening our leadership skills and are best viewed when put action. It is with these ideas and actions that the Italian culture can be shared though giving students at NJIT. Events include a taste of the Italian culture through a cannoli sale or pasta night and an insight to Italian art and theater by watching Italian movies. As members of the Club Italia of NJIT, this sharing of culture becomes more evident as we are a university with greatly diverse ethnicities.

Without the AMICI della Cultura Italiana Group, "Club Italia" would not be a strong club as it has become today. We are thankful for their support in helping to "pass the torch" to future generations.

Diana Walsh, Ph.D.
Faculty Advisor, AMICI Club

Drew University



The Italian Club at Drew University was renamed C.I.A.O. (Cultural Italian American Organization) six years ago to underline the importance of the Italian-American heritage. C.I.A.O. is a student-run organization with the purpose of informing students about Italian and Italian-American culture in an attempt to dispel common stereotypes while enjoying the culture and language. The affiliation with the Coccia Foundation and the AMICI Student Groups is very important for promoting both the Italian language and culture among college students, and providing students who are active in the organization with numerous networking and scholarship opportunities in both undergraduate and graduate Italian studies.

C.I.A.O. has been very active in promoting many cultural and community events such as field trips to New York, Opera nights to the New York City Metropolitan Opera House, lectures with international guests (some co-sponsored by the Italian Cultural Institute of New York), film screenings, an annual dinner Gala, and various fundraisers for charity. Also, students who want to participate in our annual four week language and culture summer program in Venice, Italy are eligible for a \$2,000 scholarship from the Coccia Foundation. Promotion of initiatives and sharing ideas are key components of the collaboration between the Coccia Foundation and the AMICI groups will hopefully remain strong and grow so that academic institutions, faculty, and students can benefit from its common goals and initiatives.

Professor Emanuele Occhipinti
Faculty Advisor, AMICI Club

Seton Hall University



I commend the Coccia Foundation for its efforts in promoting the Italian Culture and creating opportunities for young people to nurture their curiosity and deepen their knowledge about Italy. As I often say at our community meetings: Italy has changed dramatically in the last hundred years; it is, as all nations are, an evolving society, rooted in its ancient culture but never stultified in an amorphous mythical past. Italy is a modern nation, engaged in the global forum with its economic, enogastronomic, artistic, and cinematic (just to mention a few) contributions. It is important, therefore, that young generations of Americans, especially young Italian-Americans, are encouraged to study the Italian language in order to gain the linguistic tools necessary to understand the many facets of Italy as it was then, as it is today, and as it will be tomorrow.

The Coccia Foundation's AMICI clubs, its study abroad program (which encourages students to visit Italy), as well as its promotion of university programs that train students to become teachers of Italian are important. Perhaps, we should add, essential steps towards the goal, not only of the Coccia Foundation (beautifully summarized by the motto of "Passing the Torch"), but of all those who care about the future of Italian Studies in this country.

Gabriella Romani, Ph.D.
Faculty Advisor, AMICI Club

St. Thomas Aquinas College



Through the years, Coccia Foundation has generously provided St. Thomas Aquinas College's AMICI della Cultura Italiana students with exciting opportunities to discover, learn about, and celebrate their Italian-American heritage. These opportunities have ranged from exploration of Italian language, music, literature and art, study and travel in Italy, and network opportunities with Italian-American students and Italian-American business people. Through all of this, our Italian students have been incredibly enriched and have grown both personally and professionally. These opportunities given to our students by Coccia Foundation have proved invaluable and have left a lasting impression on them.

The extraordinary warmth and tireless efforts of the members of Coccia Foundation have helped to parade and pass the torch of pride from generations of Italian-Americans to a new generation. Our relationship with the Coccia Foundation has been a very special gift, one that we, as faculty, staff, and students, will always treasure. Mille grazie for all of your support, enthusiasm, and friendship from all of us at St. Thomas Aquinas College.

Maria Ann Roglieri, Ph.D., Faculty Advisor, AMICI Club

Hofstra University

The Hofstra University student group C.I.A.O. (Cultural Italian American Organization) participated in the annual Italian Festival at Hofstra this past September and is planning several future events. In November, the students visited Arthur Avenue in the Bronx, home to the largest "Little Italy" in America and still a vibrant Italian American community. On December 10, they held a Christmas party at the North Hills Country Club in Manhasset. A future dinner dance featuring traditional Italian music is planned. Students will have the opportunity to take new courses at Hofstra University in Italian history, literature, and culture. Students are also planning a night at the opera. A Fall 2011 conference and art exhibition will focus on Naples while the newly formed Long Island Chapter of the National Organization of Italian American Women (N.O.I.A.W.) is planning to host a film series on campus. Professors Pellegrino D'Acerno and Stanislao Pugliese recently organized a three day conference, "For a Dangerous Pedagogy: A Manifesto for Italian Studies", that unfolded at Hofstra University, the Italian Academy at Columbia University, and the Casa Italiana at NYU.

Stanislao Pugliese, Ph.D., Faculty Advisor, AMICI Club



SAVE THE DATE!
10th Annual Italian Studies
Golf Classic and Grand Reception

Honoring:
THOMAS DAIDONE
Owner Host, Florentine Gardens

Featuring:
Luigi Boccia, International Tenor
Monday June 27, 2011
White Beeches Golf & Country Club
Grand Reception - Florentine Gardens



Italian and Culture! Italian IS Culture!

Cav. Josephine Maietta, Teacher of Italian at J. Irving Baylis School

For over fourteen years, Syosset Central School District has been the hub of world languages. The students in all seven elementary schools are introduced to Russian, Chinese, French, Italian, Spanish and Latin. This year, at Baylis School, the second, third, and fourth graders are introduced to Italian, the language and culture.

The primary aim of the curriculum is to provide students with a sound basis for learning to communicate effectively and accurately in Italian with many opportunities for students to interact and to exercise the basic units learned. A second aim is to introduce students to the life and culture in Italy. The curriculum is patterned after the Standards of Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century published by ACTFL in 1999.

The students studying Italian are involved in cultural activities as much as possible since culture is an integral part of communication. Whenever possible, colleagues from art, music, history departments, and even other guests (including parents) are invited to address students about Italy's contribution to the respective fields. Students very often contribute with realia and souvenirs that they have received as gifts.

Characters like Cristoforo Colombo, Amerigo Vespucci, Leonardo da Vinci, la Befana, Pinocchio, and the annual event, Carnevale, become alive as the students learn about them. A visit to our school is always welcomed!

From time to time, trips via video tapes are taken in diverse regions of Italy to learn about the costumes, traditions, holidays, and culinary specialties of that particular region. Students also recognize some cultural similarities and differences in the patterns of behavior in USA vs. Italy and regarding family and friends.

Games, poems, rhymes, and very popular songs (O'Sole Mio, That's Amore, Santa Lucia, Come Balli Bene Bella Bimba) are thought from the simple to the complex to provide students with additional cultural information.

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Geography is also an integral part of studying the Italian language and its culture. Our game, “Who Wants To Be An Italian Millionaire”, is often played in class. Currents events about Italy are also part of our daily topics of conversation and include, the new monetary system (the Euro, the G8, the G20), The Vatican City, the Swiss Guards, San Marino etc. As a culminating activity, several cultural projects are created to enhance and reinforce what they have learned in class. Simple announcements and recitations are provided over the loudspeakers to practice listening comprehension, and the whole school becomes part of the learning experience.

Some students are also part of the “Italian Enrichment Club” that meets once a week for half an hour during recess. Learning the dance of the “Tarantella” is one of the highlights.

The third graders, during the month of October, had the opportunity to see “Pinocchio The Italian Musical” live at the Danny Kaye Playhouse at Hunter College. Before hand, the students watched the musical in class and great emphasis was placed on the importance of moral values both in Pinocchio and at Baylis. The songs in the musical were are also taught, and at the theatre, the students were very involved and had a wonderful life experience.

Italy is such a beautiful country, I invite you all to discover it with us. Ciao e un buon arrivederci.



Westchester Community College



The Italian Club of Westchester Community College was established in 1971. From the very beginning, The Italian Club has welcomed everyone from all parts and walks of life. Professor Carlo Sclafani, serving adviser, always says that “We are open to all and welcome all with open arms because that is the meaning of community.” Not many may know Professor Sclafani, but he was the very first Italian Professor to teach at WCC and has been the Italian Club’s advisor for more than forty years. The Club’s co-advisor, Professor Franco Maddalena, a former WCC student, was the Club’s first President. The objectives of the Italian Club have been to preserve and to promote the Italian culture, language, customs, traditions, folklore, and foods; to acquire a better understanding and appreciation of the Italian heritage; and to promote the significant contributions of Italians and Italian-Americans in the United States. The Club has grown tremendously to over one hundred active student members and over 1,000 supporting members, but mostly, the club has grown tremendously in spirit.

The Italian Club’s spirit extends well beyond the immediate vicinity of its campus and into large areas of New York and New Jersey. Alongside the Coccia Foundation, the Italian Club has shared many of its views in propagating the beauties of Italian culture to our communities. Therefore, we have strongly worked together in order to carry out this mission. In doing so, both the Coccia Foundation and WCC Italian Club have generated programs to immerse and generate genuine interest of students in Italian culture. Such partnership has resulted in providing scholarships for students who study the Italian language at WCC as well as scholarships for students who wish to participate in the Summer Study Program in Italy.

Every semester the Italian Club organizes many cultural activities, which include Italian concerts and operas, shows and dances, cooking demonstrations, dinner-dances, Italian films and lectures, and trips to Italy as well as different areas of the United States and Europe. The current Club President, Isabella Di Marco, born in Palermo, Italy, carries the essence of Italy and portrays nothing but Italian class. Her goal as President is to get students involved. She states, “We want to bring people together because that is Italian culture. Members will definitely come together.” This semester the Italian Club is presenting numerous activities, and everyone is welcome to join. Some of these activities are lectures including “*Bitter Spring: A Life of Ignazio Silone*” and “*The Politics of Verdi*”. The Club has also presented a variety of Italian films such as “*Intervention*” by director Anton Evengelis. This film was the premiere showing of a famous dramatic work that explores the choices we make in life, with a spiritual undertone and a universal theme. The director and some of the actors were present at this event. The Club also hosts a variety of social events to promote culture and community. One of which is the “The Harvest Fest” at Magnanini Winery & Restaurant in Wallkill, New York, that includes wine-tasting, a complete dinner, a live accordion music show, and dancing. The Italian Club’s events are enjoyable, and they revolve around bringing the community together, a key aspect that has made all of our events so successful.

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The Italian Club has always been known for the many trips that are offered to students. These trips include travel to different parts of Italy and many areas of the United States. WCC students have the opportunity to participate in the Summer Study Program in Italy. This is a wonderful experience for students who wish to learn firsthand about Italy and its culture. Last year the Italian Club awarded scholarships totaling \$35,000 to students who will study Italian at WCC or participate in the Summer Study Program. The Club's continuous effort to spread the essence of Italy to its community will last for as long as the school stands and the community embraces its efforts.

Today, those efforts are without end. The spirit of Italy shall remain alive because there is no greater learning than from the individuals who have dedicated their lives to mentoring the younger generations. These individuals preserve the essence of their culture that would otherwise fade through each generation. That is why the Italian Club cherishes every one of its advisors from Professor Madallena, who began our Italian Club's history alongside Professor Carlo Sclafani and has preserved the club's existence through the years. The Club also appreciates Mr. Coccia and the Coccia Foundation, who have helped us become the club we are today. To these individuals, and all of its members, we gratefully extend our gratitude to say, Thank You.

For more information about any of the Italian Club events, or how to become involved in the Italian Club at Westchester Community College, please call the Italian Club office at (914) 606-6790. You can also visit us at the Gateway Building, Room 233, 75 Grasslands Road, Valhalla, NY 10595.



Norelli's *Pane Amaro* Kicks off the Spring Semester for the Coccia Institute

Mary Ann Re, PhD, Director of Joseph and Elda Coccia Institute for the Italian Experience in America



An unprecedented number of participants—students, faculty, and community—packed Cohen Lounge on the evening of January 24th for the Coccia Institute's screening of *Pane Amaro (Bitter Bread)*, a compelling, provocative, and thoughtful treatment of some important, but lesser known, aspects of the Italian American immigration experience.

Gianfranco Norelli and Dr. Suma Kurien, co-writers and producers of this extraordinary documentary rich in archival footage, much of which was filmed in New Jersey, were on hand to introduce and provide background on the development of this ambitious project.

The 2009 feature-length documentary is subtitled "The Italian American journey from despised immigrants to honored citizens." It has been called the first comprehensive depiction on film of the Italian American experience. The film tracks the social, economic, and political transformation of Italians, from immigrant victims of violence and prejudice to prominent members of American society. This story is told by weaving together accounts from members of the community, comments by noted scholars, and a treasure trove of historical footage and photographs.

Sitting upfront in the energized audience were the 20 students enrolled in "The Italian American Experience," a component of our Italian Program, taught by Dr. Teresa Fiore, newly arrived Theresa and Lawrence R. Inserra Endowed Chair for Italian and Italian American Studies. On this, her 'first day of school' at Montclair State University, Dr. Fiore introduced the filmmakers, provided context for the documentary, and facilitated the lively and provocative Q&A session that followed the screening.

"As a comprehensive, well-documented work that provides a critical look at roughly a century's worth of the struggles, successes, tensions, and visions characterizing the Italian American experience, *Pane Amaro*, with its nine theme-based episodes, is an excellent educational tool," said Dr. Fiore. "Thanks to an effective synergy with the Coccia Institute, I was able to show the film in its entirety on the first day of a class on Italian American culture, which turned out to be an ideal way to introduce the topic to students eager to learn about the richness of this subject. Now, no weekly meeting goes by in my class without a reference to *Pane Amaro*, whether it is a quote from the revealing interview with a history scholar on the Wall Street bombing, the informative portrait of Fiorello LaGuardia, or the tragic family stories behind the 1911 Triangle Factory Fire."

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Pennsylvania Region

Bryn Mawr University

Members of the Coccia Foundation join with those of the AMICI della CULTURA ITALIANA network to welcome Bryn Mawr University, our newest university, to the growing list of our AMICI Network. AMICI members consist of any student attending college/university that are members of their on-campus Italian club. There are no restrictions as to its members. As a member of the AMICI group, they will have access to financial support by way of scholarships, awards, and matching funds from the Coccia Foundation and will join other groups in the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania region.



For the past decades, Italian has been an expanding field, and we have seen a significant growth in the programs and courses in colleges and universities. The number of language students has increased steadily in the United States, and extra literary subjects, ranging from cinema to culture and from poetry to Italian American novelists, now augment the traditional study of authors from Dante to contemporary literature. At Bryn Mawr, while Italian has been a major field since the College was founded, collaboration with other departments has always added an interdisciplinary breadth and curricular flexibility to the program in Italian while incorporating Italian American texts in a wide array of courses (fiction, poetry, memoir, theater, performance, film, oral histories, television). The Department takes pride in the fact that those students who have elected to continue with graduate work in Italian have been admitted to the most prestigious graduate programs in the country. The department sponsors a six-week summer program in the language, literature, and culture of Italy offered at the University of Pisa, one of Europe's oldest and most prestigious universities. The program is open to all students in good academic standing from the Tri-College community and from other universities. Through the combination of academic study and the opportunity to enjoy Italian culture, Summer Study in Pisa provides a unique learning experience. For students interested in a two week extension to the program, we also offer a community service component (WWOOF). For further information, please visit our website: <http://www.brynmawr.edu/italian/>

The Italian Department is very excited to add this new collaboration with the Coccia Foundation and strongly believes in the visibility, recognition, and recovery of an intellectual and ethnic past. We are committed to help create a more complex understanding of Italian literature, culture, and history introduced in the classrooms for the new generation of students of Italian.

Roberta Vera Ricci, Ph.D.
Faculty Advisor, AMICI Club

Temple University



The Italian program at Temple University enjoys a very strong sense of community thanks to the hard work of our Italian club officers and their ability to convey their enthusiasm for Italian and Italian American culture to their peers. The example set by Coccia Foundation contributes greatly to inspire such contagious enthusiasm, febrile activity, and professionalism. Not only does Coccia Foundation foster the diffusion of Italian and Italian American culture through its AMICI Group, but they also create ties amongst students who are passionate about their heritage and wish to learn about Italy and the deep impact Italians had on American society. Gianna Succi, one of our most motivated students and current president of the Italian club, reports that

“Coccia Foundation has provided the Temple University Italian club with many opportunities and has motivated us to be a better club.” Last year, she was the recipient of a Coccia Foundation study abroad scholarship for Italian Studies, which allowed her to study at the Temple campus in Rome during the spring semester of 2010. Here is how she describes her experience: “The scholarship that I received from Coccia Foundation helped provide me with the most amazing and most significant experience in my life so far.”

Professor Cristina Gragnani, Faculty Advisor
Professor Vlad Vintila

Wesley College



Wesley College in Dover, Delaware, is a four year institution of higher learning founded in 1873 as a preparatory school. It then became a two year junior college, and today, has more than 2,500 students enrolled in various discipline of bachelors, associate, and master degrees. The Wesley College Italian Club has been very fortunate to have an affiliation with the AMICI della CULTURA ITALIANA and the Coccia Foundation. It gives us the opportunity to experience cooperation and a connection to network with universities much larger than ours to share ideas.

We at Wesley College have benefited greatly from our participation in the AMICI Student Groups. Because of this association, we have received a monetary stipend for a student to study and travel to Italy and sponsored a speaker on John Basilone, a famous Italian-American War Hero. In the words of our student recipient, Alex Lopuchin, “As a history major, learning about ancient civilizations has always been a personal interest. Having the opportunity to travel to Italy was a special privilege because my mother is of Italian heritage. I enjoyed studying the Italian language and looked forward to using those skills as I traveled through Italy. I would like to thank Coccia Foundation for giving me this opportunity.”

Maria Teresa Sacheli-Morrison, Ph.D.
Faculty Advisor, AMICI Club

Southern Region

Clemson University



With more than 160 students currently taking Italian and enrollments that have virtually doubled in the last five years, the Italian section of Clemson University's Languages Department is definitely one of the most vibrant, up-and-coming undergraduate Italian language and culture programs in the southeast.

The generous and constant support of the Coccia Foundation over the past five years has been absolutely instrumental in meeting the increasing needs of our Italian Studies program. In the 2010-11 academic year, three of our students have benefited from Coccia Foundation Study Abroad scholarships to enhance their study abroad experience in Italy, and the Joseph & Elda Coccia Endowment for Excellence in Italian Studies, started in 2009, has already rewarded two exceptional Italian Studies minors: Rebecca Tantillo who graduated in 2010 and Janelle Lewis who will graduate in 2011.

Such initiatives speak volumes of the success and dynamic nature of the Italian Studies Program at Clemson University. Not surprisingly, Italian is rapidly becoming a popular choice to fulfill the university's language requirement! Moreover, in addition to serving its own students, the Italian section serves the entire university community with its series of Italian cultural events, including a semester-long film festival, a weekly conversation table, lectures by guest speakers, and the various initiatives of the Italian Club. Sponsored by the Coccia Foundation, this vibrant student organization has promoted incredibly successful events, such as two campus-wide soccer tournaments; a yearly fundraiser night for the Italian program; cooking classes, film nights, and study abroad informational sessions open to the general public.

Barbara Zaczek, Ph.D.
Faculty Advisor



Spotlight on Brandon Essary

A Rising Southern Leader

Dear Cav. Coccia,

I write to thank you and the Coccia Foundation for all that you have done for me and the universities of which I have been a part in the past four or five years. As an undergraduate at Clemson University I remember your first visit with Elda and Mr. Phil Sergio in 2006-07. It was exciting as at least twenty or so of us



Italian students, professors, and appassionati gathered around in the Union to hear first-hand of your support and the beginning of the AMICI club. In looking back, I realize that visit was the catalyst that helped a lasting and dedicated Italian Club to form and stay together, first with me as President during my senior year at CU and then on to other enthusiastic Italophiles up to the present day. Interest in Italian and bringing together clubs can be challenging in the Southeast; however, your visit, coupled with the outstanding professors and growing Italian Department at Clemson, helped us to see that our island of cultural and linguistic interest was much larger than we knew and certainly capable of becoming a contributing member of the AMICI network.

Your visit with Elda two years ago here at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill had a similar effect. Fortunately, you were both able to see the graduate and undergraduate presence at a departmental Italian dinner gathering and at a caffè in downtown Chapel Hill, respectively. The Italian Department is lively and animated by outstanding professors, lecturers, and more than a dozen graduate teaching assistants. Good teachers make good students, and it is no surprise to find that from week to week there are dozens of our undergraduates and folks from the community who gather for Italian conversation hour and other events on Franklin Street in Chapel Hill. I am glad that you and Elda were able to participate in the conversation hour during your visit. It is one of the best venues for seeing the lifeline of red, white, and green that flows here in this southern college town because of the Italian studies that are made available at the undergraduate, graduate, and community levels. After your visit and with the assistance of the Foundation, the club has grown significantly and has been able to host large festivals and fundraising events to increase its membership and visibility at the university and in the wider community.

On a personal note, I greatly appreciate the help that I have received over the years: a travel scholarship for Programma Ponte at Clemson; the Joseph and Elda Coccia Award for Excellence in Graduate Studies here at Carolina; and the unwavering willingness and generosity to help me and my students prosper in studying and celebrating Italy and the Italian language. The organizational and financial contributions of the Foundation are fundamental to the bringing together and sustaining of strong, vivacious Italian clubs in the AMICI network here in the Southeast. Yours and the Foundation's support have been indispensable to bringing about the presence of and reinforcing Italian Clubs and "passing the torch" of Italian culture. This has been so for individuals such as myself as a student and teacher, all the way to the universities and communities that have had the good fortune to be a part of the Coccia Foundation and AMICI network.

Grazie mille,

Brandon Essary
Graduate Teaching Fellow
Ph.D. Candidate in Italian Studies
Department of Romance Languages and Literatures

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill



The support we receive from Coccia Foundation is fundamental to exposing the rich Italian cultural history, both old and new, to the population of students and community members in and around the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. For a region of the United States that generally does not have a strong Italian-American presence, it is important to the AMICI group at UNC to be seen and heard. Through various means, we strive towards uniting and increasing the population of not only students, but also those around us who are Italian-American themselves or those who open their hearts to our bella cultura. The financial support we receive is certainly wonderful and helps us do a better job of bringing in interested people and submerging them into an Italian world. However, the scholarships and study-abroad opportunities are what gives those fortunate enough to receive them a lasting impression. Our own Brandon Essary was the first recipient of a sponsored scholarship while attending UNC last year. Brandon is now deeply involved in the AMICI group, one of the most loved teachers in the Italian department, and a wonderful example of how being exposed to Italy by a foundation that truly cares about its principles can have a meaningful and profound impact on one's life.

Professor Amy Chambliss
Faculty Advisor, AMICI Club

Written by Peter Helvie
AMICI Club President

Graduate students from The University of North Carolina now teaching Italian:

David Crane, Assistant Professor– High Point University, NC
Jenna Debs, Lecturer– Duke University
Giosuè Scaccianoce, Lecturer– Wake Forest University, NC
Jessica Greenfield, Lecturer– University of North Texas
Lorenzo Borgotallo, Lecturer– Clemson University, SC
Luca Barattoni, Associate Professor- Clemson University, SC
Michael Maher, Lecturer– College of Charleston, SC
Andrea Mirabile, Assistant Professor– Vanderbilt University, TN

Study of Italian on the Rise in the United States!

According to data published by Georgetown University in Washington D.C., the study of the Italian language and culture is growing in American universities, and the number of students enrolled in the Italian Departments has increased by over 30 percent in the last semester. At the high school level 8,259 students in New York State have taken the Advanced Placement Test in Italian. This is an increase of over 60 percent in the last ten years, confirming a trend already highlighted in the study published this year by the New York Times. In the United States, Italian is the only European language to have recorded and increase in student registration.

To answer the growing demand to study Italian, a campaign was the launched last year to reinstate the Italian AP program, which after a hard struggle just several years ago to implement, was discontinued by the College Board in 2008. A heroic effort was made to reinstate the program, led largely by the Italian Language Foundation's leaders Dr. Margaret Cuomo and Louis Tallerini. Others like former Congressman Frank Guarini have come fourth with donations in the hope that the 2011-2012 school year might see the return of the Italian AP program. In the meantime, the campaign continues and the enrollment in Italian is growing.

The Italian Ambassador to Washington, Giulio Terzi, said of the campaign, "Thanks to the financial commitment of the Italian government, some private Italian companies, and especially the Italian American community, negotiations with the American institutions to distribute the exams as early as the 2011-2012 academic year remain ongoing."

AMICI Alumni who are University/High School Teachers of Italian or who are pursuing a career in Italian Studies:

Briana C. Sarapochillo (Ramapo '10)- E. Brunswick High School, NJ

Danielle McCartan (Ramapo '10)- Ramapo High School, NJ

Frank Sedita (Drew '10)- Morristown High School, NJ

Larisa Vitaliti (MSU '08)- Dumont High School, NJ

Michael Grillo (Rutgers '08)- Memorial High School, NJ

Melissa Wells (Rutgers '07)- John E. Dwyer Technology Academy, NJ

Toni Annae (Drew '09)- Arthur L. Johnson High School, Clark, NJ

Tiziano Briscese (Rutgers '08)- Italy



High School Awards ~ Our Newest Initiative

Language is the culture and culture is the language.

Coccia Foundation randomly selected 20 high schools that teach Italian to participate in our pilot program of rewarding students, through their schools, who are presently learning the Italian language. The teachers will develop the criteria, make their selection, and inform us of their choice by including a brief description about each recipient. We hope to encourage the students' appreciation for Italian culture as well as their thirst to learn more about the language and deepen their fluency in the language.

Offering monetary awards to high schools that offer Italian language fits perfectly within our mission of promoting an appreciation for Italy's history to the young people. It is our hope that these students aspire to emerge in institutions of higher education and will continue to maintain the Italian legacy into perpetuity in both their professional and personal lives.

Another area where Coccia Foundation encourages preserving Italian culture with high school or middle school students is through a student heritage day. Coccia Institute, our academic arm at Montclair State University, in collaboration with ITANJ (Italian Teachers Association of NJ), co-sponsor a student heritage day on campus annually. Featuring Italian students from surrounding high schools and middle schools, each school develops and shares an original presentation (skits) about a chosen theme. Last year was Regional Italian Cooking, and this year's theme is Italian Music. Trophies and awards are presented at the end of the day. The students' energy in the room year after year is overwhelming!

GRAZIE A TUTTI

The Coccia Family would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their calls, get well cards, mass cards, fruit baskets, and most of all, their prayers on the successful heart surgery of my husband and our

A Night to Remember: Tenor Luigi Boccia Presents Opera Workshop to Cali School Voice Students

-Dr. Lori McCann Assistant Professor of Voice, John J. Cali School of Music



On January 24, 2011, the voice students of the John J. Cali School of Music experienced a rare artistic and educational event. The young professional operatic tenor, Luigi Boccia, shared his experience in the field of opera, his beautiful voice, and his substantial artistry in an Opera Workshop for students in the Opera Workshop classes. His visit was sponsored by the Joseph and Elda Coccia Institute for the Italian Experience in America and the Coccia Foundation and co-sponsored by the John J. Cali School of Music. The event was organized by Elisa Coccia, vice president of the Coccia Foundation; Dr. Mary Ann Re, director of the Coccia Institute; Dr. Lori McCann, assistant professor of voice, John J. Cali School of Music; Dr. Jan Prokop, acting director of opera workshop and adjunct professor of voice, Cali School of Music; and LeAnn Overton, adjunct professor of opera workshop and vocal coaching, Cali School of Music.

After an introduction by Elisa Coccia, Mr. Boccia spoke to the students about the business of being an opera singer. Our students are focused on building their instruments and developing all aspects of their musicianship and artistry. This includes work on languages, acting, diction and interpretation, in addition to technique. When these skills are honed and it is time to begin looking for work, they often do not know how to begin or what their lives will be like as working professionals. It is extremely important for them to have the opportunity to meet and speak with young professionals in the field such as Mr. Boccia. He was not only informative, but also refreshingly honest with regard to the difficult demands as a working opera singer as well as to the rewards.

Mr. Boccia spoke about finding a way to connect one's artistic and financial goals. He told of the price range and "categories" for each singer as they advance through the hierarchy of companies and roles. In addition, he spoke of the importance of regular practice, study, and physical conditioning. "Make no mistake. This is a PHYSICAL job," he stressed. Some of the students had never thought of it that way before.

Mr. Boccia gave recommendations about outstanding summer programs in Italy. He also encouraged the students to develop their own unique style and personality in their artistic expression, especially in terms of repertoire. For example, he said that his specialty is in Neapolitan songs because he is from a small town outside of Naples. This gives him a unique perspective, especially here in the U.S.

After speaking for over an hour and without warming up, Mr. Boccia asked the students if they would like him to sing. "Yes please," they responded enthusiastically. He then sang two lovely Italian songs by Neapolitan composer Francesco Paolo Tosti: *L'ultima canzone* and *Non t'amo piu*. His full, resonant, ringing, tenor voice resounded throughout the room. Added to this was his musically and dramatically sensitive interpretation. The students were thrilled.

Continued on Page 29

Pane Amaro

During the refreshments, members of the community shared episodes from their families’ personal histories, reflecting on emotional and sometimes heartbreaking experiences elicited by Norelli’s *Pane Amaro*. The enthusiastic feedback from the event validated its importance for the academic and broader communities in attendance. All in all, the documentary *Pane Amaro* was an ideal vehicle to mark Dr. Fiore’s debut as the Theresa and Lawrence R. Inserra Endowed Chair in Italian and Italian American Studies.

“Even the lively debate prompted by the screening among the participants and the insights offered that night by the co-writers of the documentary have become food for discussion as we debate the implications of the Sacco and Vanzetti case or the question of language use among Italian Americans,” adds Dr. Fiore. “I recently found out that after the Coccia Institute event, students have organized home screenings of the DVD in order to continue this interesting conversation with friends and family members. Now we all look forward to Norelli and Kurien’s new documentary on Italians in California!”

Luigi Boccia

Afterwards a group of students (primarily tenors!) surrounded Mr. Boccia and crowded around the piano with questions for him about repertoire and technique. Mr. Boccia proceeded to sing and demonstrate as he encouraged the students to sing as well. He gave them a mini voice lesson on the tenor aria “Una furtive lagrima,” from Donizetti’s opera *L’Elisir d’amore*.

After Mr. Boccia finally took his leave from these eager students, promising to return, they continued to linger around the piano singing and talking about what they had learned from him that evening.

The students and faculty of the John J. Cali School of Music are grateful to the Coccia Foundation and Institute, Mary Ann Re, Elisa Coccia, and most especially to Luigi Boccia for making this educational and inspiring evening possible.



Sen. Anthony Bucco, Dr. Nancy Carnevale & Dr. Joseph Sciorra
“Italian Folk: Vernacular Culture in Italian-American Lives”
MSU-Dickson Hall’s Cohen Lounge
October 28th, 2010



“Italian Folk” Presentation--by Dr. Joseph Sciorra
Sen. Anthony Bucco with Guests &
MSU Amici Club Volunteers
October 28th, 2010

Coccia Institute: Looking Ahead

Director Mary Ann Re, Ph.D.

The forecast is a bright one as we look ahead to the variety of engaging programs to be sponsored by the Coccia Institute at MSU this spring! Kicking off the semester is a screening of the important documentary “Pane Amaro” (Bitter Bread), a powerful, eloquent and emotionally stirring depiction of the Italian American immigration experience. On hand to introduce this exhaustively researched film will be its director/producer, Gianfranco Norelli (January 24th —Dickson Hall’s Cohen Lounge).

March will be a particularly active month at the Institute. During Women’s History Month, two presentations have been planned to celebrate this year’s theme, “Italian and Italian American Women”. Dr. Dorothy Rogers, Chair of MSU’s Department of Philosophy and Religion, will introduce the community to Bona Sforza, 16th century Queen of Poland, an educated and accomplished member of the formidable Milanese Sforza dynasty. “Bona Sforza: Faith, Freedom and Feminism” will be presented on March 3rd. The following week (March 9th), graduate students in Dr. Victoria Puig’s class from MSU’s College of Education and Human Services will treat the academic and surrounding communities to: “Perspectives on Maria Montessori in the Early Childhood Classroom”. Both of these events will take place in Dickson Hall’s Cohen Lounge and, as is our custom, will be followed by a reception.

Our annual signature collaboration with ITANJ (Italian Teachers of New Jersey) will close the month on a vibrant musical note. I’m pleased to announce that this year’s theme is “Italian Pop Music”—a fine follow-up to the themes of regional Italian cooking, Commedia dell’Arte, and Italian sports, subjects pursued by our creative and energetic student-participants over the last three years (March 30th—University Hall’s 7th floor Conference Center).

On April 18th, in collaboration with the Office of the Provost and the Department of Spanish and Italian, we will be welcoming Dr. Teresa Fiore to the academic community. Our newly appointed holder of the Theresa and Lawrence R. Inserra Endowed Chair in Italian and Italian American Studies, Dr. Fiore, will be presenting a keynote address. Following this event, there will be a reception and entertainment by talented singers from the Cali School of Music’s Opera Workshop, a most fitting program since the Cali School singers had entertained those in attendance in February 2009 when the Search for the Chair was announced by MSU President, Dr. Susan A. Cole (University Hall’s 7th floor Conference Center).

Closing out the month of April is our annual Scholarship & Awards Ceremony. During this event, recipients and their families will be congratulated, and our generous donors thanked for their continued support of Coccia Foundation and Circolo degli Amici-funded study abroad, internship and academic achievement awards (April 25th).

We enthusiastically welcome your participation in these events! Stay tuned for more details as the dates for the programs draw closer. Until then, best wishes to you and your families for the new year!

List of Upcoming Events

1/24/11 - Pane Amaro Film Screening

Montclair State University – Cohen Lounge – 6:15 p.m. to 8:15 p.m.

3/3/11 -- Bona Sforza: Faith, Freedom, and Feminism

Montclair State University – Cohen Lounge – 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

3/9/11 – Perspectives on Maria Montessori in the Early Childhood Classroom

Montclair State University – Cohen Lounge – 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

3/30/11 – “Italian Language and Culture Day”

Montclair State University – University Hall, 7th Floor Conference Center – 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

4/04/11 – Keynote Address by Dr. Teresa Fiore, *New Inserra Endowed Chair in Italian and Italian American Studies*

Montclair State University – University Hall, 7th Floor Conference Center – 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

4/25/11 – Italian Scholarships & Awards Ceremony

Montclair State University – Cohen Lounge – 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.



*Help us in
"Passing the Torch"
to future generations.*

Coccia Foundation is offering open membership to all those who wish to actively participate in preserving, protecting and perpetuating our rich Italian culture and heritage for the benefit of future generations.

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