



SOTTO VOCE

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF
THE CENTER FOR ITALIAN AMERICAN STUDIES
AT BROOKLYN COLLEGE

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DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Dominick Carielli, Ph.D.

Since Geri DeLuca used this issue's Chairperson's Message to address the value and importance of being an officer in a student club, I thought that I would discuss how an internship experience can be of tremendous benefit to a student.

While some academic programs require an internship or fieldwork component, many do not have such a requirement. It is then incumbent upon the student to seek out such an experience. This semester, we were able to offer an internship course through the Italian American Studies Program: Internship in International Studies (Italian 15). The internship requires 126 hours of fieldwork at an appropriate company or organization. This year, we were able to secure an internship placement with the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute, Queens College/CUNY. Students can work at the Calandra Institute's mid-Manhattan office, and can specialize in marketing, journalism, website maintenance, TV production, or book design/publishing.

An internship offers a myriad of benefits to students who choose to pursue such an opportunity. First and foremost, it gives students the chance to apply knowledge and skills they have acquired in the classroom to a real world setting. Students can then further develop and expand what they know and what they can do through the internship process. An internship also provides a wonderful opportunity to talk with people who are actually working in an area in which you have an interest. This social networking also can be a valuable resource when job seeking or when needing a recommendation for a job or graduate school. Some interns eventually secure a position at their former internship site.

(continued on page 2)

CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE

Geraldine DeLuca, Ph.D.



Looking for a place to hang out, belong, make friends, plan events that reflect your interests, your political concerns, and your imagination? On a campus of 16,000 students from many backgrounds, that may seem daunting; but it need not be. Let me suggest two places to start: The Italian-American Student Union, and the Italian Culture Club. Both are student government funded organizations that will welcome your energy, imagination, and camaraderie.

For decades, like many other ethnic groups, Italian Americans have participated faithfully, variously, in the preservation and advancement of an American university culture that didn't always acknowledge its contributions. Italian Americans attended American schools, fought in American wars, worked in American industries. However, there was not always a ready place to study Italian American achievements: Their art, history, music, scientific breakthroughs, and their contributions to law, medicine, politics, and industry. Nor was there a place on many campuses where students of like ancestry could congregate and organize activities.

However, that time and place have come. We have reached an historic moment. Our President is African American, the last two Secretaries of State have been women, the Speaker of the House of Representatives is an Italian American woman named Nancy D'Alesandro Pelosi, and the Secretary of Homeland Security is an Italian American woman named Janet Napolitano. Italian Americans, who once kept their achievements and culture mostly to themselves, have firmly established their power and their voices.

(continued on page 2)

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

(continued from page 1)

While the Center for Italian American Studies and the Italian American Studies Program sponsor research, seminars, symposia, and courses that focus on the Italian American experience, at the heart of all this activity are our students. We hope to provide a rich experience to students of all ethnic backgrounds who have an interest in things Italian American. Becoming involved with the Center and its programs may be one of the best things that you can do for your academic life, your social life, and your future career.

**Italian Heritage and Culture
Month Events Fall 2008**

(pages 2 & 3)



Louis Barrella, M.A., returned, once again, to Brooklyn College to give another thrilling presentation on Italian Opera. This year, Mr. Barrella spoke about the relationship between opera and real life.



Don Reich, Ph.D., delivered a lecture on Roman architecture. Dr. Reich is Professor Emeritus in the Department of Political Science, Brooklyn College, and also served as Provost of the college. In retirement, he divides his time between Brooklyn and Hartland, Vermont, where he volunteers at the Upper Valley Food Coop and writes articles, in which most of the things he says are true, about his travels in Italy and Ireland.

Dr. Reich recently returned from Sicily, and we hope that he will provide us with another fascinating lecture on the architectural wonders that he discovered there.

CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE

(continued from page 1)

Their presence is reflected at Brooklyn College in its interdisciplinary minor – Italian American Studies (and its fully developed plan for a major). It is also reflected in its two student organizations, both housed in the Center for Italian American Studies. Students from the two clubs sit on the executive board of the Center where they plan activities such as scholarly talks, film showings, poetry readings, parties, fashion shows, and award ceremonies for academic excellence and leadership. If there's something you'd like to see added to the list, you need only join one of these organizations and take part in making it happen.

On a practical note, graduate schools and future employers will be delighted to see your participation in leadership positions and in a rich extra-curricular life. More important, you may come to know yourself in the deepest and largest way you can. Come to 1212 Boylan Hall, visit the Center's webpage, or contact us via e-mail. We welcome you.



A group of students, faculty, and staff listens intently to Dr. Cavanaugh's presentation.

Jillian Cavanaugh, Ph.D., gave a lecture on the cultural and social changes that have taken place in the town of Bergamo, Italy. The lecture considered how the people of Bergamo relate to their locally important places in various ways, and is based on a chapter from Dr. Cavanaugh's new book, *Living Memory: The Social Aesthetics of Language in a Northern Italian Town* (Wiley-Blackwell, April 2009).

Jillian Cavanaugh is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology. Dr. Cavanaugh received her B.A. from Vassar and her Ph.D. from New York University. Dr. Cavanaugh has done extensive field research in Bergamo, and has published articles on food, language shift, accent, and gender. She became interested in Italy when her family moved there for a year when she was in high school.

Dr. Cavanaugh was recently promoted to Associate Professor in the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology.

Congratulations to Dr. Cavanaugh on her many accomplishments.

Coccia Foundation Provides Center With Generous Grant

The Coccia Foundation has provided the Center with a generous grant of \$3,000.00. The grant, which extends for two years (\$1,500.00 per year), will be used to bring local high school students, teachers, and counselors to Brooklyn College to learn about Italian American studies. Each year of the grant, the Center will sponsor a day-long symposium on careers related to Italian American studies.

The Coccia Foundation, founded in 1994 by **Cavaliere Joseph Coccia, Jr.** and his wife **Elda**, establishes and supports educational, cultural, and societal events for the youth of the Italian and Italian-American community.

SPECIAL THANKS

Provost William A. Tramontano, Ph.D. has provided funding to the Center for its many activities, and has also generously funded our student awards for academic excellence, which were given to two outstanding undergraduate students this spring.

James J. Periconi, managing principal owner of Periconi, LLC (New York), recently gave a talk at Brooklyn College on careers in environmental law. After his presentation, he met with Drs. Carielli, DeLuca, and Viscusi in the Center for Italian American Studies. He graciously donated his honorarium to the Center.

The Center for Italian American Studies houses the **James J. Periconi Library**, a collection of books donated to the Center by Mr. Periconi.

President Kimmich Retires

The Center bids a fond farewell to President Christoph Kimmich, who will retire after this semester.

Thank you for your support of the Center and its programs.

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Center for
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