The Fall 2009 edition of Sotto Voce has a slightly different look. This is the fifth edition of the newsletter, and the beginning of my third year as Director of the Center for Italian American Studies. After two years of hard work, the Center is now firmly reestablished and is a strong presence on the Brooklyn College campus. Our programs and student clubs are enjoying great success and popularity.

This summer, my wife and I had the great pleasure of visiting Lenora Panaro, the sister-in-law of the late S. Eugene Scalia, former Professor of Italian at Brooklyn College, and the aunt of Justice Antonin Scalia (Prof. Scalia’s son). It was twenty years ago this past October that Ms. Panaro donated Prof. Scalia’s collection of Italian literature books to the Center, and forty years since Prof. Scalia retired from Brooklyn College in 1969.

Ms. Panaro contacted me with the generous offer to donate additional books to the Center, and I was more than eager to accept. She welcomed us into her elegant home, which was built in the 1850s, where we enjoyed coffee, pastries, and fascinating conversation. We toured the grounds, and saw the adjacent home where Prof. Scalia and his family lived, as well as the walls and walkways that the late professor made during his retirement years from stones he found in a nearby abandoned quarry. We then ventured to the garage, where we found hidden treasures resting in cardboard boxes. I secured two boxes of literature books; one Italian, and the other, French. The French literature books have found a good home in the Brooklyn College Library. The Italian literature books will be added to the S. Eugene Scalia Memorial Library, housed in the Center.

The books in the S. Eugene Scalia Memorial Library are sorely in need of cataloging and conservation. I am working closely with Marianne LaBatto (Associate Archivist) to secure a grant to begin the long process needed to preserve these important and valuable books. The first phase of the project will be to formally catalogue the books. Books that are decaying and that are unbound will be placed in individual boxes to protect them from further decay. The second phase involves sending books out to be bound and preserved. This project will span approximately two to four years.
SECOND ANNUAL SENATOR MARTIN J. GOLDEN STUDENT AWARDS

On April 28, 2009, the Center for Italian American Studies honored two outstanding undergraduate students with the annual Martin J. Golden Awards for Academic Excellence. The recipients were Francesca Eramo and Felicia Onofrietti.

Francesca Eramo is a mathematics/secondary education major with a minor in Italian Studies. She has a 3.914 Grade Point Average. Ms. Eramo is a Macaulay Honors Scholarship student at Brooklyn College, and a Peter Vallone scholarship recipient. She has been on the Dean’s List since attending Brooklyn College in the fall of 2006, and received the Macaulay Honors College Chancellor’s Award for Academic Excellence in 2009. Ms. Eramo’s goal is to become a high school math teacher in the New York City public school system while pursuing her graduate degree.

Felicia Onofrietti is an English major, and has a 3.9 Grade Point Average. She has consistently been on the Dean’s List since attending Brooklyn College in the fall of 2006. Ms. Onofrietti is a New York State Licensed Message Therapist, having studied message at the Swedish Institute of Message. She is also a Yoga teacher, and received her Yoga teacher certification from the White Lotus Institute. Her current goal is to pursue a Master’s in literacy or English as a second language.

Addiopizzo:
Anti-Mafia Initiatives in Palermo

In May of 2009, Eduardo Zaffuto, a founding member and leading activist of Addiopizzo, came to speak at Brooklyn College. Mr. Zaffuto was invited by the Clinton Library to speak in the U.S. on Addiopizzo and its agenda of critical consumption. Addiopizzo began as a grassroots movement to fight against the Mafia tithe (pizzo). Addiopizzo seeks to create a group of consumers in Palermo, Sicily who are willing to support businesses that denounce extortion.
The stately, tree-lined home of Lenora Panaro.

The former home of Professor S. Eugene Scalia.

Although slightly covered with vegetation, one can discern the stone path and wall that Prof. Scalia constructed during his retirement.

President Gould Visits Center For Italian American Studies

In August of 2009, Brooklyn College welcomed a new President, Karen Gould, Ph.D.

President Gould dropped by to chat with members of the Presidential Advisory Committee on Italian American Affairs at their September 2009 meeting. She enjoyed a cup of espresso, and discussed the missions and work of the Committee and the Center, and talked about study abroad programs at Brooklyn College.

Pictured at left are President Gould and Connie DiGeronimo, Coordinator, Office of Institutional Advancement.
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 in the spring of 2009.

Charles S. Vizzini, Esq. has donated several volumes of Italian literature books to the Center.

Events For Spring 2010

*Italian American Women Writers Panel*
*Lecture on Italian Architecture*
*Annual Student Awards*

SPECIAL THANKS

The Presidential Advisory Committee on Italian American Affairs unanimously elected Fabio Girelli-Carasi, Ph.D. as Chairperson of the Committee and the Italian American Studies Program. Dr. Girelli-Carasi is a Professor of Italian in the Department of Modern Languages.