

Message from the President

Dear IAA Members,

I hope this message finds you and those you love doing well. As I have said in the past, the summer is a very busy time for all of us. A frequent activity that makes up a big portion of a busy schedule during the summer is travel. While traveling to Southern California in June this summer to attend my 45th high school reunion, I made a visit to one of my favorite locations in downtown Los Angeles—Olvera Street. For those of you unfamiliar with it, historic Olvera Street is located immediately across the street from the famous and scenic Los Angeles Train Station. To note the street's historical significance, Los Angeles was founded in 1781 by Spanish explorers (*pobladores*, which refers to the 44 original settlers and 4 soldiers who founded the city), on a site southeast of today's Olvera Street. Whenever I am visiting L.A., I go to Olvera Street to do a little shopping, which is a lot like walking down a crowded Mexican-village street packed with outdoor vendors in the early 1800's, and eat an order of taquitos, which is Spanish for "small taco," purchased from a small open-air restaurant. Although I have been doing this same ritual with my family since childhood, while I was shopping this time, a local merchant commented on my hat and proceeded to ask me my name and where I lived. When I mentioned my last name, he said, "That's Italian! Have you seen the Italian Hall around the corner?" Although I had been to this part of L.A. many times, I had always associated it with its Hispanic roots, not with Italians. Following his instructions, I made the three-minute walk around the corner to see the Italian Hall.



Although the Hall is now an ethnic clothing store, according to the plaque outside the building, "The Italian Hall, designed by architect Julius Kraus, was built by the Pozzo Construction Company in 1907 for Marie Ruellan Hammel. The upper floors served as a center for the Italian organizations who used the hall for political meetings, banquets, weddings, and theatrical (operatic) performances. Several stores occupied the lower floors. The Italian Hall was one of several buildings on Olvera Street that was associated with the Italian community. The *Societa Italiana de Mutua Beneficenza*, formed in 1877, moved its

offices to the second floor in 1908 when the building opened for business. Various Italian societies, including the *Circolo Operaio* (Italian Work Circle) rented the building for events. In 1916, a political rally was held in the hall by Emma Goldman, a well-known political activist, feminist, and labor organizer."



I guess the point of my story is that no matter where I go, there always seems to be a place where the Italians had a presence and made a significant contribution. I hope that upon my next visit to L.A., I will be able to find out more about the Italians in Los Angeles with the opening of the Italian American Museum of Los Angeles (IAMLA), which will be located next to the Italian Hall.

In a similar fashion, I hope other members of the IAA will let us know about what you find out about Italians in those cities and locations where you travel this summer. And when you do find out, you will share those stories and photographs with us at upcoming IAA events. This month, the IAA will be sponsoring a day in the

country with a wine tasting and picnic at Milla Nova Winery on Saturday, August 29th. You can read more about this event in the "Events" feature of the newsletter. I look forward to seeing all of you at Milla Nova Winery.

Warmest regards,
Bernardo J. Carducci, President

Results of the Italian American Association Elections/Dinner Meeting

On Wednesday, November 18th, the IAA hosted its election/dinner event at Clifton's Pizza. To begin the election, the first portion of the election process that evening was devoted to electing individuals for seats on the IAA Board of Directors. As the only current member of the IAA Board of Directors whose position was up for renewal, James Benassi was reelected to another two-year term. After receiving and accepting a nomination from the floor, IAA member Madison Steele was elected as the newest member of the board for a two-year term. The second portion of the election was devoted to electing executive officers to the IAA Board of Directors. The outcome of this portion of the election process included Bernie Carducci as President, Bob Scorsolini as Vice President, Aaron Silletto as Secretary, and Phil Castagno as Treasurer.

Presented below is the list of the 2016 IAA Board of Directors and their contact information. Please feel free to contact them with any ideas or suggestions for helping to promote and preserve our Italian-American culture in our community.

Executive Officers:

Bernie Carducci, President—bcarducc@ius.edu
Bob Scorsolini, Vice President—bscorsolini@aol.com
Aaron Silletto, Secretary—asilletto@goldbergsimpson.com
Phil Castagno, Treasurer—pcastagno1@aol.com

Board Members:

James P. Benassi—jimpat@mw.twcabc.com
Walt Carpenter—yvww@bellsouth.net
Paul Castagno—ppcastagno@twc.com
Michele Melillo, Editor, IAA Newsletter—michelcl@ulh.org
Angelo Vaccaro—avaccaro@bellsouth.net

I would also encourage you to extend your congratulations and appreciation to these individuals for their willingness to give of their time and effort on behalf of the IAA.



[Clockwise] Kathleen Bailey, Tom Van, Rose Issette, and Ampelio Isetti engage in some post-election political discussion after casting their votes during the IAA elections.

Bernie Carducci celebrates his reelection as president of the IAA for 2016 with longtime IAA members Mimi Guarnieri (left) and Maria Terry.

IAA President Bernie Carducci shares this special photo opportunity with Whitney Guild, daughter of IAA members Walt and Vicky Carpenter, and Jenny Guild, Whitney's daughter and Walt and Vicky's granddaughter, following the IAA elections.