



IASA-WRC: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow
- from the IASA-WRC President, March 26, 2013

Over the last few years I've given a lot of thought to the role of the Western Regional Chapter (WRC) and the position it holds within the Italian American Studies Association (IASA). It's not the most glamorous or trendy of topics—no rabbit will be pulled out of the hat by the end, no puppet will come to life, no miracle will transpire. But do read on all the same.

The WRC is a local offshoot of a national academic organization. As such, its objectives mirror those of the national. In the last few years we have worked particularly hard at reinforcing the relationship the WRC has with IASA. This collaboration has resulted in a membership dues change starting in 2013 which reinstated something that had been agreed upon when the WRC was first created: that all WRC members would also be IASA members.

▪ **Understanding Italians in the West**

But the WRC's objectives are more complicated than just acting as an offshoot of the national. A good deal of the history and culture of Italians in the Western states do not easily fit into the models afforded us by the common assumption that Italian Americana usually really refers to an East Coast variety of Italian ethnicity. This assumption also tends to track the migration narrative as beginning with turn-of-century mass migration from Southern Italy to New York and leaves out say Northern Italians who immigrated to the West in the nineteenth century or college-educated Italians immigrating to Silicon Valley in more recent decades.

And so it has long made sense to me that the WRC was just plain necessary. It has again and again helped bring to the surface stories and experiences of how Italians in the West differed from those elsewhere. Given the WRC's main hub has always been the San Francisco Bay Area, much of the work done here has had a California focus. Since its inception in 1974, the WRC has organized countless activities and programs.

The exhibit “*Una Storia Segreta*” and its accompanying public programs which documented and disseminated the history of Italian Americans as enemy aliens during World War II is perhaps the most well-known and deeply significant of these projects. However, there have been countless others: a conference on the fishing industries of Monterey, San Francisco, Pittsburg, and Santa Cruz; a symposium on composer Harry Warren; a conference on farming in the Central Valley; a celebration of the recovery of a Ralph Fasanella painting; and many speakers and film screenings.

▪ **Supporting New Scholarship**

The WRC has always been forward-thinking in finding new ways to reach its multiple objectives, and thus, the officers recently decided to create a one-time grant of \$500 to support research on the culture and history of Italians in the West. In an effort to work closely with IASA and to insure a broader applicant pool, the proposed grant will be managed through IASA. The WRC has always sought to illuminate the Italian American experience in the West; supporting new academic research is a concrete way to reach this goal.

▪ **A WRC Sabbatical**

At the same time, those of us who have been leading the WRC (most current officers have been in a leadership role for a decade or longer) have decided that it’s time to re-think who leads the organization and how to best reach its objectives. What kinds of programs or initiatives? Where should they take place? With who in mind? Also, who should the WRC’s future leaders be?

And so, the WRC officers have decided it’s time the organization take a break, a sabbatical, you might say; temporarily pausing all activities of the organization. During this brief hiatus, the officers will not be actively working for the WRC.

During this time you will still hear from us—we will continue to let you know (via email, our website, and social networking sites)—when events of relevance take place or if there is otherwise news of interest to WRC members and friends. We would also like to hear from you. And so we will also be looking for and talking to potential new members and new leaders: individuals committed to working for the WRC-IASA objectives.

▪ **Next Steps, New Officer Nominations**

The current officers will reconvene around the end of 2013. In the mean time, we are also calling for new officer nominations (deadline for officer nominations is Oct. 15, 2013). Between then and now, please email me (lruberto@peralta.edu) with your ideas and interests. I look forward to hearing from you.

alla prossima,
Laura E. Ruberto

GRANT ANNOUNCEMENT

Italian American Studies Association-Western Regional Chapter (IASA-WRC)

Research Grant (\$500)

The Italian American Studies Association-Western Regional Chapter (IASA-WRC) is pleased to offer a one-time award of \$500 for a graduate student or recent graduate-degree recipient whose research focuses in a significant way on the history and culture of Italian Americans in the West. We welcome all disciplinary approaches to the field of study.

ELIGIBILITY:

- Graduate student or recent graduate-degree recipient (Master's or Ph.D. granted in 2010 or after) in any academic discipline whose research focuses in a significant way on Italian American culture in the West, as defined below, are eligible and encouraged to apply.

- Graduate students in good standing in their own home institution's graduate program (i.e., completing work in a timely manner; no academic probation, etc.) or who have completed a degree in 2010 or thereafter.

-The grantee need not be working, studying, or residing in the West but his/her work must highlight the West.

-The "West" is defined as those U.S. states represented by the IASA-WRC: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Washington. Qualifications and quality of application will be considered in decision making. The fellowship award is decided by an ad-hoc Italian American Studies Association committee created for this grant, selected via the Executive Board and the IASA-WRC officers.

Requirement of grant: Any and all future publications, including online publications, resulting from research supported by this grant must acknowledge the Italian American Studies Association – Western Regional Chapter.

Questions: please contact Teri Ann Bengiveno at TBengiveno@laspositacollege.edu

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES:

PLEASE SEND THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS TO:

Roseanne G. Quinn at quinnroseanne@fhda.edu

1. Cover letter (in the body of e-mail message)
2. A 2-3 page proposal of the dissertation, thesis, or other research project completed or in-progress. The proposal should clarify what aspects of the project as a whole are on subjects pertaining to Italian Americans and the West.
3. A 1-2 page curriculum vitae. Please include current mail address, e-mail address, and telephone number.
4. Copy of unofficial transcripts (as proof of good standing and/or year of degree granted).
5. One letter of reference, preferably from an academic advisor, committee member, and/or dissertation director, addressing the relevance of your project for the study of Italians in the West.

Documents 2, 3, and 4 must be saved as PDFs (or combined in one PDF only) and sent as attachments. Letters of reference must be sent as scanned documents in PDF form—signed and on letterhead.

DEADLINE: September 15, 2013

Late or incomplete applications will not be considered. The winner will be announced at the 2013 IASA conference.

IASA-WRC Officers

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IASA-WRC website

www.aiha-wrc.org

IASA-WRC needs new officers

Deadline for officer nominations is Oct. 15, 2013

Email Laura Ruberto, lruberto@peralta.edu, or Teri Ann Bengiveno, TBengiveno@laspositascollege.edu, if you are interested in nominating yourself or someone else (self-nominations are accepted)

IASA Conference 2013

The Italian American Studies Association will be announcing its annual fall conference details shortly.

Please visit www.italianamericanstudies.net for updates.