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**THE NEW JERSEY
ITALIAN AND ITALIAN AMERICAN HERITAGE
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HIGHLIGHTS

of

The 2nd New Jersey Congress of Italian American Organizations

*New Jersey's Italian Americans
– Serving Each Other*

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2005
AT
RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY**

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2nd CONGRESS

On October 29th, 2005 the Commission hosted the 2nd New Jersey Italian American Congress at Rutgers University in New Brunswick. The program featured presentations from Commissioner Richard Bilotti and Advisory Council Chairpersons Gargione and Dr. Poiani, on the Commission's progress in meeting the objectives set by the 1st Congress last October. The presentations were punctuated by UNICO speaker Ralph Contini, who read the Governor's Proclamation on Italian Heritage Month and former OSIA President Angelo Bianchi, who touched on the changes in perceptions of Italian Americans today. Keynote speaker Assemblyman Paul DiGaetano highlighted the contributions of Italians and Italian Americans and delighted the attendees with a delivery in Italian and English.



Commissioner Richard Bilotti
*Chairman of the
Community Outreach Relations Committee
of The NJ Italian Heritage Commission*



**Attendees at the 2nd New Jersey Congress of Italian
American Organizations on October 29, 2005**
Hosted at Rutgers University in New Brunswick

The half-day event brought together leaders from the Italian American community who separated into planning groups to discuss political and business networking, promoting the Italian language and Curriculum Project, promoting a positive image of Italian Americans and coordinating efforts of Italian American organizations in NJ. Two new documentary film trailers were shown and twenty-five exhibition tables promoted Italian American organizations. The Bloomfield Mandolin Orchestra performed during the lunch. Chairman Larry Paragano commented, "This is an important, recurring event for Italian leaders as they work to promote the Italian Heritage in the State of New Jersey."



Dr. Eileen Poiani
Advisory Council Co-Chair



**Assemblyman Paul DiGaetano
And Commission Chairman Paragano**



Mr. Frank Gargione
Advisory Council Co-Chair

HISTORY AND PURPOSE OF THE CONGRESSES

Beginning in 2004, the Commission's Community Advisory Council (CAC) and Community Outreach Relations Committee (COR) has organized statewide conventions for the Italian American community the State of New Jersey. These Committees are among the fifteen Committees of the Commission and are comprised of twenty members, drawn from different professions and regions of New Jersey. Their focus is to create networks among the NJ Italian American community and increase the public's involvement in promoting the Italian Heritage. The Commission hosts these conventions as a means of generating direct lines of communication between the public and the Italian American organizations. The Commission organizes presenters on particular topics of interest and then records public requests and suggestions in an effort to develop program ideas, create future community events, and advise the Italian American Community of New Jersey.



Angelo Bianchi, Esq.
2005 Congress Speaker



Assemblyman Paul DiGaetano
Receiving Commendation from
Executive Director Roger Marinzoli



Associate Director Anthony Carabelli
Presenting Commendation to
Mr. Ralph Contini

2005 CONGRESS AGENDA

Each year, the Congresses are structured around a central theme; in 2004, the theme was "Unifying the Efforts of New Jersey's Italian American Organizations". This year's theme was "New Jersey's Italian Americans – Serving Each Other". In addition to the various speakers during the initial portion of the Congress, attendees had the opportunity to attend several different workshops, planning sessions and public hearings. The Commission representatives at these sessions recorded the top community recommendations, which were then reported back to the Congress attendees in the final plenary session.

The 2005 workshops included the following:

- A. Service Through Education of the Italian Heritage
- B. Service Through Italian American Organizations
- C. Service Through Business Networking
- D. Service Through Political Networking
- E. Promoting the Italian Language in New Jersey
- F. Promoting Positive Images of Italian Americans

WORKSHOP RECOMMENDATIONS GENERATED BY THE COMMUNITY

1. “Service Through Education of the Italian Heritage”

- Use upcoming Winter Olympics in Italy as an opportunity to promote the Italian Heritage and Culture, in order to support the objectives of the “Universality of Italian Heritage” Curriculum Project
- Use outreach campaign to local school boards and municipal government officials, through the Italian American Organizations, to promote the Curriculum Project
- Emphasize the universality of the Italian Heritage and the contributions of Italians to global civilization, in order to promote the applicability of the Curriculum Project for all students in New Jersey
- Expand the “Amicizia” student letter exchange program to support the objectives of the Curriculum Project
- Feature students and teachers who have participated in the Curriculum Project at next year’s Congress

2. “Service Through the Italian American Organizations”

- Develop the Commission into an Italian Resource Center for New Jersey, which could emphasize a Speaker’s Bureau, Film Library and statistical library
- Strengthen the Commission’s Community Calendar of Events by submitting events and programs by Italian American Organizations on a regular basis to the Commission
- Create a County Committee, with representatives from each county responsible for liaising with Italian American organizations throughout the State
- Create a hard cover Community Calendar of Events for distribution

3. “Service Through Business Networking”

- Develop program for student internship and student exchange opportunities with the universities, related to Italian businesses
- Interact with the Italian business community to gain understanding of contemporary Italy
- Formalize an approach for the Italian and Italian American business community in New Jersey to support Italian cultural activities

4. “Promoting a Positive Image of Italian Americans”

- Launch a multi-media campaign in New Jersey that promotes positive images
- Organize and promote the existing Italian educational programs available in NJ
- Emphasize the contributions of Italians and Italian Americans to American society

5. “Promotion of the Italian Language Hearing”

- Identify and catalog grants from US and Italian sources related to the development and promotion of the Italian language
- Identify process by which Italian Language teachers from Italy could be invited to teach in New Jersey, including the alternative teaching route certification process
- Create a system by which Italian language teachers from neighboring states could be made aware of employment opportunities in New Jersey school districts

2005 RESOLUTIONS PASSED BY ATTENDEES IN PLENARY SESSION

Resolution C-2005-1 “Pledge to Promote Positive Image of Italians”

Whereas, the Italian American and Italian community is desirous of promoting the Italian Culture and preserving the Italian Heritage in the state of New Jersey;

Whereas, the Italian American and Italian community is proud of their culture’s contributions to global society and their State;

Be It Resolved, by this 2nd Statewide Congress of Italian American Organizations, that the Italian and Italian American community of New Jersey represented here today pledges to actively promote positive images of Italians, Italian Americans and the Italian Heritage at every opportunity, in order to serve the greater community interest.

-- Passed by unanimous acclamation

Resolution C-2005-2 “Promoting Inter-Organization Participation”

Whereas, the nearly 400 Italian American organizations in the State of New Jersey all have developed unique and worthwhile initiatives;

Whereas, these Italian American organizations are desirous of leading the Italian American Risorgimento in the State of New Jersey;

Be It Resolved, by this 2nd Statewide Congress of Italian American Organizations, that the Italian American organizations of New Jersey actively work to foster inter-organization relationships by inviting fellow organizations to participate in their meetings, programs and activities.

-- Passed by unanimous acclamation

Resolution C-2005-3 “Promoting Inter-Organization Participation”

Be It Resolved, by this 2nd Statewide Congress of Italian American Organizations:

To organize elected officials, former elected officials and local volunteers to solicit the New Jersey State Legislature to introduce a new Joint Resolution in both Chambers, on the model of 2004 Senate Joint Resolution No. 45, which would establish the month of October as Italian Heritage Month in perpetuity;

To effect this process prior to the closing of the 2005-2006 Legislative Session; and

To effect communication to both gubernatorial candidates regarding this issue.

MOVING FORWARD

The Commission expresses its gratitude to the members of the Community Advisory Council, the Community Outreach Relations Committee, the Commission’s professional staff and all of the attendees and the speakers. The Italian American community’s participation made this second convention a success and continues the momentum generated by the 2004 Congress.

The Commission looks forward to reporting on the Italian American community’s progress on the issues raised in the workshops and by the Congress Resolutions of 2005.