

WisItalia General Meeting Summary Minutes November 19, 2011

Location – Trinity Academy, W 225 N3131 Duplainville Rd, Pewaukee, WI 53072

Attendees – Frank Alfano (Area Rep - Madison), Tony Bruno (Pres - Madison), Don “Cheech” Cicero (Area Rep - Racine), Blaise Di Pronio (Adv Committee/Funds Dev Committee - Milwaukee), Albana Kume-Robertson (Scholarship Chair/PR-Marketing Committee -Milwaukee), Shana LaFore (Ed Committee - Madison), Elizabeth Mitchell (Treas/Scholarship Committee - Pewaukee), Rita Prigioni (Sec/Web Chair/Funds Dev Committee - Madison), Al Rolandi (Adv Committee Funds Dev Committee - Milwaukee), Liz Zizzo (Teacher - Milwaukee)

Board Members Not in Attendance – Ralph Annina (VP/PR-Marketing Chair - Kenosha), Tom Balistreri (Area Rep - Milwaukee), Pete Feira (Area Rep - Green Bay), Giovanna Miceli Jeffries (Ed Committee Chair - Madison), Peter Pingitore (Area Rep - Kenosha)

Call to Order – 10:05 AM

Tony Bruno called the meeting to order. This was the seventh general meeting of 2011.

Announcements

- Welcome to Shana LaFore, new member of the Education Committee.
- Tony Bruno brought extra copies of WisItalia brochures and notepads for use by members and others in promoting the organization. They will be kept at Trinity Academy to be taken by WisItalia members whenever we meet at this location.
- Dr. Roberto Pennazzato is the new Education Director, replacing Eleonora Cammareri, at the Italian Consulate in Chicago. He has been in touch with several WisItalia members to-date. He has been invited to Kenosha and Milwaukee to see the Italian language programs in the schools in those areas. He has also been invited to the Italian Workmen’s Club of Madison’s 100th Anniversary dinner and theater in January 2012.

Old Business/Secretary’s Report

- Rita Prigioni went over the list of action items from the last WisItalia meeting held on 9/24/2011, for follow-up:
 - Tony Bruno looked into other options for teleconferencing for the WisItalia meetings. Both Tony and Frank Alfano are following up on this way of conducting the meetings. However, it was decided that having face-to-face meetings was the preference of the WisItalia members. See the 2012 Meeting Schedule later in these minutes for details.
 - Reminder to all Italian language teachers in Wisconsin: WisItalia grant funds are now available for the 2011-12 school year. See www.wisitalia.org/pages/grants.html for details. All requests should be emailed to Giovanna Miceli Jeffries at italink@att.net.
 - Rita Prigioni followed-up on collecting the committee tables, in which committee members selected the tasks they were interested in performing. She has all the completed tables except for the Education Committee.
 - Tom Balistreri was not in attendance, so he was not able to give his status report regarding the situation at Victory. **ACTION REQUIRED:** This item will be on the agenda for the next meeting in January 2012.
 - Liz Zizzo was to submit a report on the accomplishments from Victory for the first 3 weeks of school. The report is in progress and will cover the September-December time period. **ACTION REQUIRED:** Liz to submit the report at the January 2012 meeting.
 - Victory principal, Wanda Varela-Katz, had wanted more exposure in promoting Victory and wanted more people to visit the school and the students. Elizabeth Mitchell (Trinity Academy) made a visit to the school and spent time in the classrooms with the students and teachers. On 10/25/2011, Al Rolandi arranged for the students of Victory School to have the privilege of hosting the world’s accordion champion, Cory Pesaturo. **ACTION REQUIRED:** Blaise Di Pronio indicated he will follow-up with Tom Hemman of the Italian Community Center (ICC) in Milwaukee to see if he could get more people involved with Victory School. **ACTION REQUIRED:** Al Rolandi indicated he still needs to set up a meeting with Dave Spano of the ICC to get more involvement of ICC members with Victory.
 - At this meeting, Don “Cheech” Cicero gave Rita Prigioni the name of the person (Ric Bencriscutto) who is teaching Italian at St. Rita’s and St. Edward’s to 5th grade students. **ACTION REQUIRED:** Rita to add Ric Bencriscutto to the directories on the WisItalia website and contact him, as well.

- Ralph Annina and Cheech Cicero were going to visit Prairie School and Catholic Central about their interest in starting Italian language programs. They met with Greg Gorth of Catholic Central, but have not met with Prairie School yet.

ACTION REQUIRED: Ralph Annina and Cheech Cicero to follow-up with Prairie School.

Treasurer's Report

- Elizabeth Mitchell reported that she received the grant funds from the Italian government on 10/28/2011, for \$9,258 (6740 Euros). Unfortunately, her computer got a virus and she was currently in the process of having her computer restored. Note: After the meeting, Rita Prigioni was able to re-create the Treasurer's Report with past and current information and put it into the new format as requested by Board members. She emailed it to Elizabeth, who will make a few more deposits from donation checks that she received before it is distributed to members. A check for \$750 in grant funds was approved by the WisItalia Board to be given to the WisItalia IWC-Madison Children's Italian Language Program. Rita mailed the check to Giovanna Miceli Jeffries, who was not in attendance at the meeting.
- Individual donations of \$770 and business sponsorships of \$1,650, combined to total \$2,420 to-date. Since the last meeting on 9/24/2011, WisItalia received a \$200 individual donation from Chris Kleinhenz, and Rita was able to solicit a Level I \$100 business sponsorship from Torenzio Tours, Inc. (Terry Hart).

Education Committee Report

- Although Giovanna Miceli Jeffries was not able to attend, she provided a summary report to Tony Bruno, who reported on the following:
 - Giovanna has only received 50% of the school year enrollment data that she requested from the Italian teachers, and which she needs to submit to Dr. Pennazzato, Italian Consulate Office. She has solicited the teachers 3 times for this data, but has not received it all to-date.
ACTION REQUIRED: Any teacher who has not submitted the required data needs to do so ASAP.
 - Giovanna has been in touch with Dr. Pennazzato various times. He plans to get together with the WisItalia Executive Board, so a meeting will be set up in the coming months.
 - Giovanna has received grant requests from Ralph Annina for Bradford High School and from Steve Falsetti for Victory Elementary School. The new process is that the grant requests are to be reviewed by the Education Committee prior to the WisItalia Board members voting on the requests to approve or not. As a result, Ralph Annina needed to provide more information to justify the grant request in terms of the goals and educational application part of the request. Giovanna indicated that she is going to require the applicants to be specific about the process of using the monies for materials for the class. The grant application from Steve Falsetti was sent via regular mail, not email, so copies of the grant request were handed out to a few of the Education Committee members in attendance at the meeting. Note: After the meeting, Rita Prigioni scanned the grant request from Victory School and emailed it back to Giovanna so she could email it to those who had not received it yet.
ACTION REQUIRED: All Education Committee members are to provide comments on any submitted grant requests to Giovanna Miceli Jeffries.

Website Report

- Rita Prigioni reported that WisItalia has 471 Facebook fans, and sends out the WisItalia Web Updates Newsletter to 538 people (of which, it gets resent to approximately 120 more people).
- Rita produced a web usage report for the months of September and October 2011. For those two months, there were 2,712 visits, with 5,257 page views. The site averages 44.46 visits/day, and had a high of 69 visits/day and a low of 21 visits/day. The most popular pages are the Clubs page, Home page, Events page, Jobs page and Italian Webs page. Most people access the site through search engines (76.33%), by direct traffic (12.91%), or by referring sites (10.77%).
- Status of converting website to WordPress: all the pages from the site page have been set up and the function for the site to scale from desktop to tablet to mobile device has been set up. What needs to be done: "skin" the site (select the design), get the content converted into the new site, and get all the items that need to be easily updateable set up within WordPress.

Scholarship Report

- Albana Kume-Robertson reported that she had contacted all the clubs and organizations listed on the WisItalia website Scholarship page to get their updated scholarship program information. After she collected the information, she sent it to Rita Prigioni, who updated the website with the current information. A few of the organizations will not have updated information until after January or February 2012.

Board Reports

Green Bay – Pete Feira (who was not in attendance) reported to Tony Bruno that Italian classes will be starting next year at a third high school and two grade schools (one private and one public). For the winter months of January-March 2012, Angela Dirden will be representing Green Bay while Pete is in Florida. He will resume again in April.

Kenosha – Peter Pingitore (who was not in attendance) reported to Tony Bruno that he had sent a letter to Vince Ruffolo (younger Vince) to see if he was interested in being the chair of the Funds Development Committee. Peter is also looking for a replacement for himself as the Kenosha Area Representative due to his other commitments.

ACTION REQUIRED: It was suggested that the teachers from the schools that attended the opera in November (Tremper, Indian Trails, Bradford) write and submit a short web article on their opera experience, including the dinner at the ICC afterwards. This could be an assignment for the students to get their perspective of the opera and what it meant to them. Photos would be nice, too.

Madison –

- Frank Alfano reported that he and Tony Bruno met with the new principal of LaFollette High School. They indicated they were told that the school district could not add any new programs for the next couple of years. They are exploring to see if the “Madison school virtual campus” curriculum has an Italian language program.
- In other news, Frank stated that an Italian architect he had met in Mantova, Italy this past summer contacted him to let him know that he and his wife were coming to Wisconsin to tour some Frank Lloyd Wright buildings. Frank was able to get together with him for the tours and this person is interested in setting up some student exchanges with LaFollette High School, Taliesin in Spring Green, and Mantova.
- Giovanna Miceli Jeffries, in her report to Tony, indicated that the children in the Saturday Italian language program will be performing at the IWC 100th anniversary celebration in January 2012, by singing the Italian National Anthem.

Milwaukee –

- Al Rolandi reported that Cory Pesaturo, a world-famous accordion player, performed for the students at Victory Elementary School in October. He is from Rhode Island and his specialty is jazz (digital and acoustical). Al is also currently working on soliciting a business sponsorship for WisItalia.
- Elizabeth Mitchell (Trinity Academy in Pewaukee) reported that they will have 20 students going to Rome from March 28-April 9, 2012. They recently had their annual school dinner and Tom Balistreri came to the event. They are currently prepping for the AP Italian language exam, which will be held once again this May 2012. They have a second alumnus who is doing a college internship in Rome for the current semester.
- Liz Zizzo reported that Victory had a successful Lago del Bosco Italian immersion “camp” experience in November. Six staff from the actual Lago del Bosco camp in Minnesota came to Victory for this event.
- Albana Kume-Robertson, who had been a sub at Victory for about a month this Fall, is currently subbing in the Milwaukee Public School District. They are trying to find a way for her to be considered for short-term substitute teacher jobs at Victory.
- Blaise Di Pronio reported that on 12/3/2011, the Abruzzese Society will hold a Holiday Dinner and Dance at the ICC for \$40/person. This event is open to the public. Details at <http://iccmilwaukee.com/italian-times.html>.

Racine – Cheech Cicero reported that he and Ralph Annina met with Gary Gorth, the principal from Catholic Central in Burlington about setting up an Italian program, as the school is looking to add another language to their curriculum. They will have more information to share in January 2012.

2012 Meeting Schedule

- January 21, 10:00 am – 12:00 noon, to be held in Madison, place TBD (in conjunction with the 100th anniversary celebration)
- March 17, 9:30 am – 12:00 noon, Trinity Academy, Pewaukee, WI
- May 5 or May 12, 4:30 pm – 5:30 pm (in conjunction with the Teacher of the Year Awards Banquet), ICC, Milwaukee (Al Rolandi to follow-up on the date).
- July 28, 10:30 am – 11:30 am (Social meeting, in conjunction with the Racine Roma Lodge Festa), Racine, WI
- September 15, 9:30 am – 12:00 noon, Trinity Academy, Pewaukee, WI (Annual meeting: election of officers)
- November 17, 9:30 am – 12:00 noon, Trinity Academy, Pewaukee, WI

Adjournment – The meeting adjourned at 12:05 pm.