



December 2014

CanaDiana's Year End Note

Since the founding of CanaDiana one year ago, we've been able to help a host of activities take place, many of them occurring after our winter newsletter went to print.

New members have joined our group, offering lectures and seminars in Siena or at the universities of Pisa, Bologna and Udine. Our lack of a permanent lecture venue has given certain of our initiatives an itinerant cast, which makes a good fit with our stated objectives to build cultural networks with different universities and institutions across the country.

Particularly valuable has been the contribution by Janice Keefer who is taking on the task of promoting our association among other Canadian writers and Toronto personalities. Here is how she expresses our declared objectives:

Under the streets of Siena and Toronto secret rivers run: though Siena is thousands of years old, and Toronto a creation of the nineteenth century, both cities feed, through buried rivers, into an ancient geological past which continues to shape their future. CanaDiana is a way of imagining the confluence of Siena's imagined river Diana with, among Toronto's many buried waterways, Taddle Creek (originally called the Little Don River) flowing beneath the University of Toronto's downtown campus and shaping the contours of Philosopher's Walk. To bring together varied streams of learning, to communicate ideas and share a rich variety of cultural forms and experience integral to both Italy and Canada: these are the aims of our association. We believe that our 'underground' or autonomous status, vis-à-vis the Universities of Siena and Toronto, will form a valuable complement to these institutions in our common task of facilitating Italian encounters with Canadian writers, artists and Canadian Studies scholars, and of creating initiatives for the discussion, promotion and translation of their works.

Janice and Michael Keefer spent a week in Siena in October, during which they gave lectures and readings dealing with a Ukrainian-Canadian writer's perspectives on the current crisis in Ukraine and on the de-democratization of elections, introduced respectively by Laura Failli at the Liceo Scientifico Galilei, and by Fabrizio Ghilardi and Joe Ingram at the Siena Studies School (SIS) which has become a frequent meeting place, thanks to the generous help of Juan Carlos Ruiz, the organizer of cultural events at SIS. Janice and Michael's stay in Siena was part of a lecture tour promoted by CanaDiana, during which Janice spoke at universities in Naples, Bologna and Udine. A particular pleasure for Janice was the reading of her poems at "Il Conventino," the enchanting

abode near Anghiari of Anglo-Canadian scholars Elizabeth Wickett and Stephen Brichieri Colombi, who gave our guest speakers a chance to meet other Canadians living in Tuscany. This reading was coordinated by the director of the Centro Canadese of Bologna, Carla Comellini

Perhaps the foremost of our many reasons to thank Janice and Michael Keefer for their commitment to our association is their offer to provide a few weeks' accommodation in their Toronto home to CanaDiana members undertaking an acceptable research/ study project in conjunction with Canadian schools, institutions or recognized leading cultural figures in the area. In return, Moira Mini is investigating possibilities for a writer's retreat in the vicinity of Siena to be offered to one Canadian writer per year during the winter low-tourist season.

Among other lively presentations given under the auspices of CanaDiana the following must be mentioned:

In April, Toronto psychoanalyst Mary Kay O'Neil Lowy came to Siena to present, along with psychiatrist Andrea Marzi, her research on psychoanalysis and art to a greatly interested and very responsive audience at SIS; in May Anna Foschi (two-time past President and currently vice-President of the Association of Italian Canadian writers) lectured on the status of Italian immigrants on behalf of CanaDiana at the University of Pisa in conjunction with a course on geopolitics directed by Enrica Lemmi; her greatly appreciated talk has spurred further interest in the theme of immigration among Italian scholars. Later in the Autumn, as part of the same course, Elizabeth Wickett and Stephen Brichieri Colombi gave a fascinating lecture on the interconnection of human rights and the sharing of that increasingly precious and imperiled resource, water; in November writer Jon Redfern, former teacher at Centennial College, Toronto, delivered a series of lectures to students at the Liceo Galileo Galilei. He spoke about the late Canadian master of the short story, Maritimer Alistair MacLeod. Redfern's seminar discussions focussed on the style and themes of MacLeod's prize-winning story, 'The Boat.' He also taught his own short story, 'Fever,' to a fourth form class.

Jon Redfern's presence in Siena was the occasion for our proposed Translation Workshop project to take off: in November, a very active and gifted group of students from Liceo Scientifico Galilei, instructed by their teacher of English, Laura Failli, met at the literary Café "Carta & Zuccherò," to present and discuss their translations of Redfern's short story with the author, comparing them with those of the PhD student Flavia Franco from Rome and with translator Moira Mini. Other sessions on the same topic have followed at the Liceo Scientifico and at the Auditorium Antonianum in Rome. Consultation with the author has continued electronically. Further workshops on texts by other authors are planned. Translations of chapters from of Antanas Sileika's *Buying on Time* have already been sent in, in anticipation of the next meeting. Anyone interested in translating is invited to consider one of the 15 chapters of the aforementioned book. Once the sessions on *Buying on Time* are completed, we'll proceed with Janice Keefer's "Looking at War," after which we hope to have received texts from Peter Oliva and Joe Fiorito or other Canadian writers willing to contribute.

The edited translations will eventually be assembled for a "homemade" journal, to be posted on the website which Luca Trabalzini has generously offered to create for us. We might even envision using them for regular publication, if our financial circumstances should become more favourable. In spite of our current unfunded condition, a publication has actually appeared from our first

CanaDiana days - *Views of Ice from Siena*, Ferri, Mini, Quintavalle eds., Betti Publisher, which is the result of activities at the former Centro Siena-Toronto - while two more are forthcoming: Licia Canton's *Vino alla Mandorla e Fertilità* edited by Laura Ferri and Moira Mini, and Maureen Scott Harris's *Sussurri dall'acqua*, edited by Alessandra Bordini, who is currently attending the Master of Publishing Program at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver.

Publications apart, we must congratulate individual members for their achievements in making CanaDiana visible by means of their voluntary Canada-related initiatives (at no cost to the association). For example, we can mention Fabrizio Ghilardi's presentations on issues of multiculturalism at the University of Naples in December and at the cultural festival Nottilucenti held in SanGimignano in June, or Linda Knowles's interview of Canadian writer Genni Gunn as well as her and Laura Ferri's presentations on Gunn's work at a conference of the British Association for Canadian Studies in London. The exchange of cultures graciously undertaken by fellow member Maria Luisa Farsi through her cooking classes delivered to Canadian visitors to San Gimignano was a welcome way of spreading news of CanaDiana's existence and aims, as was Gabriella Iacobucci's important presentation to University of Salerno students regarding her translation of *Tenor of Love* by Mary di Michele, in the presence of the author.

All in all, the past few months' activities have been both rewarding and promising for the future development of our organization.

All members are invited to send in news about their own Canada-focussed initiatives when they wish to have them posted in our upcoming website.

Several events are being planned for 2015. They will be announced as soon as dates and arrangements are confirmed.

I personally apologize for CanaDiana's failure to send details about the discussion during last October's assembly to all those who could not attend it because they live abroad. They will receive the minutes, if requested, as soon as some expected secretarial help becomes available.

We hope you will encourage us to fulfill our plans by confirming the renewal of your membership for next year by the end of January 2015.

Meanwhile, very best wishes to you all for a delightful Holiday Season.

Laura Ferri