

## A festival for Italy in Toronto

### Founding of the Republic honoured with various events

June 8, 2008

By Layla Crisanti

Last week, the Italian Consulate in Toronto was host to Toronto's celebrations for the Festa della Repubblica, (Italian Republic Day, the national Italian holiday celebrating the founding of the Republic of Italy in 1946).

The Italian community came together to commemorate June 2. Hosting the event was Consul General Gianni Bardini, along with his assistant Veronica Ferrucci. There was a large gathering on Beverley St., representing economic, commercial, cultural, and political institutions, as well as Italians who live and work in Toronto.

Opening the evening was a speech by the Consul General, of Italy, followed by a speech by the Honourable Gino Bucchino. Then came the music of the Michael Occhipinti Jazz Ensemble and a splendid buffet for all.



Bardini emphasized that the anniversary celebrations are an opportunity to pause and reflect. "Today we have occasion to consider what it means to be Italian, and the values for which Italians are appreciated – values which should be protected."

In his speech, Gino Bucchino leaned towards the necessity of looking at our history and treasuring its lessons, so that we are better able to confront the crisis that Italy is undergoing today.

The Hon. Joe Volpe said, "A wonderful celebration, especially because there are so many Italians in attendance who have been very successful in Canada while at the same time not forgetting their origins."

Volpe spoke with Attilio Scorsolini, a decorated Garibaldini, who was born in 1915, and is someone who can truly say: "I helped create the Republic" seeing that he voted in favour of a republic-style government over a monarchy in the elections 62 years ago.

Among the many expressing their satisfaction for the evening and paying tribute were Paolo Ponti, President of the Italian Trade Commission, Martin Stiglio, Director of the Italian Cultural Institute, and Julian Fantino, Commissioner of the OPP.

But the party had begun earlier that day at Queen's Park. During the morning, the Italian flag was hoisted up in front of Queen's Park as a symbol of the celebration.

For the third consecutive year, the festivities got underway in front of the parliament buildings where at about 11:30 a.m. a group gathered to commemorate the special day.

Many honoured the day with their presence such as MPP Laura Albanese who said, "Congratulations to Italy, which today turns 62."

The Counsel General of Italy for Toronto, Gianni Bardini, presided over the daytime gathering. "I'm honoured for this role, which allows me to continue conveying the values and merits of our country. We need to make full use of our numerous organizations and institutions, which are a real luxury." For Bardini, unity is the starting point that allows to promote Italy even beyond its own community to the rest of Canada.

Making his usual appearance was Gino Bucchino, who in his speech talked about the Italians immigrants' contribution to Canada, without forgetting their place of origin.

After the speeches, the national anthems were sung by Jessica Scarlatto. As the lyrics to "Fratelli D'Italia" were resonating through the beautiful morning air and the Italian flag was being unfurled, the emotion became palpable.

Among the participants was the Honourable Judy Sgro, Julian Fantino, George Visintin, President of the Italian Chamber of Commerce, Carlo Filipazzo of the Italian National Congress, and Paolo Ponti, President of the Italian Trade Commission.

Also present were Martin Stiglio, President of the Italian Cultural Institute, Maurizio Gherardini, President of the Toronto Raptors, and Veronica Ferrucci, Assistan Consul General. Among the MPPs present were Michael Bryant, Liz Sandals, Charles Sousa, Rick Bartolucci, Lou Rinaldi, Mike Colle, Mario Sergio, Peter Shurman, and Rosario Marchese.

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