

Sagra del Libro Book Fair Kicks off IAWA's 25th Anniversary in Little Italy, NYC

IAWA . (March 09, 2016)



The Italian American Writers Association (IAWA) kicked off its 25th anniversary with the Sagra del Libro book fair in an historic collaboration with the Order of the Sons of Italy, Lt. Joseph Petrosino Lodge #285 that was initiated by IAWA's recently departed Board Member and friend, Emelise Aleandri and is, in fact, dedicated to her memory.

More than 50 authors participated in the event representing more than 30 publishing houses including [Fordham University Press](#), [2][Guernica Editions](#) [3], [Bordighera Press](#), [4][Finishing Line Press](#), [5] [NYQ Books](#) [6], [Rain Mountain Press](#) [7] to name a few at the Sagra del Libro on February 26, 2016. All, not just Italian American authors, publishers, literary event organizers and artists displayed, read out loud and sold their books, materials, and services at the [Lt. Joseph Petrosino Lodge](#) [8] #285 [8] at the [Church of the](#) [9][Most Precious Blood](#), [9] often referred to as the San Gennaro Feast Church at 113 Baxter Street in the heart of Little Italy, New York City.



In past years on a Sunday in May most bookstores remained open in Italy to support and promote its writers. This initiative was called "Celebrazione dei Libri" (Celebration of Books). IAWA's Sagra del Libro continues in the spirit of that movement by celebrating Italian-American literary culture and including other cultures as well.

Besides the co-sponsors -- the [Italian American Writers Association](#) [10] (IAWA) and the [Order of the Sons of Italy in America](#) [11], other organizations and their members attended. Eight [Vito Marcantonio Forum](#) [12] members participated, five of which are published authors, who aside from retailing their published works, took turns at the podiums giving talks about their respective research. Side by side with VMF was the [Remember the Triangle Fire Coalition](#) [13] representative, Rose Imperato, who brought flyers about the annual commemoration event scheduled for Wednesday, March 23 at the sight of one of the worst industrial tragedies in U.S. history. On March 25, volunteers are invited to Chalk for the Triangle Workers.

Gil Fagiani and Maria Lisella are founding members of both the VMF and are also Board members of IAWA. The Sagra Book Festival Committee is chaired by Robert Agnoli for the Petrosino Lodge and co-chaired by IAWA board member Gil Fagiani who is also a co-founder of the Vito Marcantonio Forum. The Committee also includes Bill Castleberry, Leslie Donofrio, Angel Marinaccio and Chris Thornton. The Church of the Most Precious Blood generously provided the venue for the event.

Admission to the Sagra del Libro was free; authors selling books paid \$5 for the space. Dinner was included as was live entertainment and the chance to network with authors, publishers and editors made the evening special. For those who would like to participate in the Sagra del Libro for 2017, please contact Gil

Fagiani fagianella@aol.com [14] or visit the IAWA facebook page or iawa.net

If you missed the book fair and would like to purchase one of the following titles: Vito

Marcantonio: Radical Politician by Gerald Meyer; Thieves in the Family by Maria

Lisella; Logos by Gil Fagiani; Waiting for Yesterday by Michael Parenti; So You Wanna be

Italian? by Anna Filameno; The Italian American Table: Food, Family, and Community in New York City by Simone Cinotto.

All of these books are available for purchase at the VMF [Bookshop](#) [15] or by sending an email to geraldjmeyer@aol.com [16] or visit amazon.com

ABOUT The Lt. Joseph Petrosino Lodge #285: was formed by John Fratta and Robert Fonti in February 1999, and is the only remaining OSIA lodge in Manhattan. The Order Sons of Italy itself was formed in 1905 in the very same neighborhood. The Lodge is named after Lt. Giuseppe (Joe) Petrosino (1860-1909), the first Italian-American Police Lieutenant of the New York City Police Department. The Petrosino Lodge, whose current President is William Bray, produces and supports many charitable, cultural and social events throughout the year, raises funds for cancer research, Cooley's Anemia, Autism and other causes, and most recently hosted a Christmas party for the children of the Henry Street Settlement House. Emelise



Aleandri was a former president of the Lodge.

ABOUT: IAWA was founded in 1991 to promote Italian-American literature by encouraging the writing, reading, publication, distribution, translation, and study of Italian-American writing and to give Italian-American writers a public forum where the full range of Italian-American expression could find a hearing. IAWA has nurtured the growth of a genuine community of Italian-American readers and writers. Prof. Robert Viscusi, Brookludian Professor and Executive Officer of the Wolfe Institute for the Humanities at Brooklyn College, is President and Founder of IAWA. Last year he served on the OSIA Grand Lodge Literary Award Committee, chaired by recently deceased Past President Emelise Aleandri. The 2nd Saturday Readings is the longest running literary series in Greenwich Village.

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