

## Minnesota Trentini Club hosts 20<sup>th</sup> ITTONA convention

After all was said and done, the consensus was, "Your club has set the bar for future ITTONA conventions." Another unforgettable comment made by an out-of-town conventioner was: "You people on the Iron Range really, really like each other."

Worldwide in scope and held every two years, the most recent International Tyrolean Trentino Organization of North America conventions have been hosted by Trentini clubs in Toronto (2010), Solvay (2008), New York City (2006), San Francisco (2004) and Trento (2002).

This year, 192 Trentini converged on Minnesota's Mesabi Iron Range July 20-22 to attend the 20<sup>th</sup> ITTONA convention. Included were 14 from Trento and 105 from other clubs around the U.S. and Canada. Members of Trentini Tirolesi del Minnesota made up the remainder. The Most Reverend Luigi Bressan, Archbishop of Trento, was among those who traveled the farthest to grace us with his presence, both personally and spiritually. His Excellency concelebrated Sunday Mass at Resurrection Catholic Church in Eveleth with the Rev. Charles Flynn, pastor.

Visiting ITTONA registrants filled the Holiday Inn Express in Mountain Iron through the weekend and joined their local hosts at a Friday night "Melting Pot Mixer" and Saturday evening banquet and program, using shuttle service that transported everyone between the hotel and the Mountain Iron Community Center, directly across the four-lane highway.

Holiday Inn General Manager Jane Serrano and her staff were exemplary in their service and attention to detail during the planning stages and throughout the convention. They even provided a complimentary, full breakfast after the Sunday morning Mass.

Some of the out-of-town registrants arrived a day ahead of the official beginning, especially club presidents who were scheduled to meet early the next afternoon. For them, our Minnesota contingent arranged a shuttle bus to take everyone to Valentini's Supper Club in Chisholm for a family-style Italian dinner.

After returning to the Holiday and with no place to go, people began asking, "What do we do now?" That question was quickly answered when a member of our Minnesota Club took it upon himself to drive to the nearby city of Virginia and purchased a case of wine for the group. When he returned, a spontaneous social commenced in the hotel's great room that went late into the night.

Most conventioners began arriving at the Holiday Inn to register early Friday. Even among weary travelers who were looking to erase the strain of long hours on the road or in the air, it became an instant opportunity to renew old friendships and gain new ones. And as they signed in,

each was given a cloth shopping bag holding a wide variety of items. Included were name tags, convention details, a souvenir atomic desk clock, a refrigerator magnet depicting the Mesabi Iron Range, local pasta, and visitor information brochures.

Down the hall from the hotel lobby, our club's hospitality room featured a selection of soft drinks and snacks complemented by both red and white wines made by club member Bill Krall. Bill had distilled 58 bottles of his specialties for the occasion. Along one wall in the room, Minnesota club member LoRetta Seppi displayed her extensive Pinocchio collection.

The Friday night mixer began with a buffet of Iron Range homemade food including potica, miniature pasties, pizzelles, and apple strudel along with Italian sausage, peppers, and porketta sandwiches prepared by a local Italian market.

The crowd's attention then was directed to the opening ceremonies which included the national anthems of Canada, Italy, Trentino and the United States followed by welcoming remarks by Trentini nel Mondo President Alberto Tafner, U.S. Consultore Rosemarie Viola, and Minnesota State Senator David Tomassoni. Tomassoni, a native Iron Ranger, played professional hockey in Italy for 16 years and was a member of the Italian Olympic Hockey Team in 1984.

After the welcoming remarks, the crowd was entertained with a selection of favorite Italian songs by the Iron Range's popular I Cantatori under the direction of John Pagliaccetti. Meanwhile, Lindsay Fort, in the guise of Befana, circulated through the crowd handing out bogus "lumps of coal" and other candy.

Next came a skit about a young Trentino couple who emigrated to the Iron Range three generations ago in search of a better life. As a narrator told their story, costumed "Angelina" (Pete O'Brien) and "Luigi" (Joe Gnoza) interspersed by dancing and lip-synching to four popular songs recorded by Louis Prima and Keely Smith. The pace then wound down with the Iron Range's Sam Miltich and the acoustic jazz ensemble — the Clearwater Hot Club — who played a variety of easy listening music for relaxing, socializing, and dancing that went through the night.

Early Saturday morning, convention goers had the choice of three bus tours: one into the iron ore open pit at Hibbing Taconite; another to the Hibbing High School, the Hull-Rust mine view and past the boyhood home of Bob Dylan; and another directly to the Minnesota Discovery Center. At about noon, everyone converged on the Discovery Center for polenta that club members were making in three large copper kettles

outside the center's pavilion. The service, polenta and all the lunch trimmings — including the sugo prepared under the direction of Minnesota club member Sharon Kearney — were described as "excellent."

Before returning to the Holiday for some "quiet time" and club pictures, participants had the opportunity to explore the center's research library and archives, ride a trolley to a reconstructed mining location, and play miniature golf. There also were activities in the center's theatre, including another appearance and talk by Alberto Tafner, a first-class movie about the Trentino region narrated by Trentini nel Mondo Director Anna Lanfranchi, and an introduction to *Filò*, the new English-language magazine celebrating Trentino heritage, by Editor Lou Brunelli.

The Saturday night banquet was a sit-down affair featuring an entrée of either top sirloin steak, chicken Marsala, or Minnesota walleye. Program speakers during the evening included Minnesota Trentini Club President Debbie Corradi, ITTONA President Ben Maganzini, and Trento Province Representative James Zanella. Prior to the dinner, Abies alba, a musical quartet from Trento, Italy,

marked their inaugural trip to the U.S. with their performance at the convention. The group members included Maurizio Tomasi, Franco Susini, Mauro Odorizzi and Nicola Odorizzi.

The following night, Abies alba presented a free concert at the Atrium Restaurant in Hibbing that was open to the general public. From Hibbing, the musical quartet traveled to Colorado, Wyoming and Utah to perform for other Trentini clubs along the way.

**From:** Luigi Bressan  
**Subject:** R: Grazie mille  
**Date:** August 5, 2012  
**To:** Debbie Corradi

You have the right to be proud of your ancestors and also of the successful Convention! We are indebted of great gratitude towards you!  
 May the Almighty God reward your generosity in hosting us.

+ Luigi Bressan, Archbishop of Trento

Saturday night's festivities concluded with more socializing and mostly unstoppable spirited dancing to the rock 'n' roll music of the local band, "The Renowns."

Sunday came too soon. But it culminated the convention with a beautiful Mass in a beautiful Catholic church on a beautiful, sunny morning in Eveleth. In their second convention appearance, I Cantatori sang from Resurrection's choir loft, helping to

add to the celebration and solidify our convention motto, "A bonding of friendships."

Before bidding "Arrivederci," everyone was provided with a bag lunch and given the opportunity to use a shuttle bus to visit a nearby confectionary for home-made candy and a popular gift shop.

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**The following copy was written by Fr. Charles Flynn**, pastor of Resurrection Catholic Church in Eveleth, and submitted by him to *The Northern Cross*, the Duluth diocesan newspaper.

Some stayed in Italy. Others left the Trentino region of Italy in the early 1900s and came to America. On July 20-22, they gathered at the Mountain Iron Community Center from Trentino, Canada, Utah, California and many other places to celebrate their heritage: their faith, their stories and traditions, ballads and opera, wines and polenta.

The convention included several workshops on their traditions and tours of the Iron Range. Abies alba, a musical quartet from Trento, Italy presented a concert of music from the Trentino region preceding the banquet on Saturday.

The convention concluded with Mass at Resurrection Church in Eveleth on Sunday, July 22 at 8:30 a.m. The Archbishop of Trento, Archbishop Luigi Bressan, presided and preached at the Mass. The music at the Mass was led by I Cantatori, a well-known Iron Range chorale led by Rocci Lucarelli. Later in the day, at supper held in his honor, Archbishop Bressan regaled the local clergy with stories of the Council of Trent that took place in his Cathedral from 1545 to 1563.

(Fr. Flynn treated Archbishop Bressan and four Duluth diocesan priests to a steak barbeque. The guests included the Reverends Frank Perkovich, Fred Method, Brian Lederer and Ronald Gagne.)