



La Bandiera

The Banner



*Newsletter of
The Italian Heritage Lodge of Fairfax #2517
Order Sons and Daughters of Italy in America*

**DICEMBRE 2018
MESSAGGIO DALLA PRESIDENTESSA**

Cari amici,

As we begin the season of Advent this weekend, I look back on this year and the opportunities we have all had to be together, share our Italian-American heritage, make new friends and enjoy conversations with each other over familiar meals, we've watched our young children grow and seen our older members become more precious to us with age and time. I am grateful to all of you who assisted me in my position as President, and worked tirelessly in every way, to embrace such a joyful group of family and friends. Sadly, this year we lost two members, Sara Peroni and Kevin Brady. On your behalf, as officers, trustees, council members and members, I have extended heartfelt condolences and sympathies, together with Masses, to their families. May their souls rest in peace and may their families be comforted by our prayers, knowing they will be greatly missed and remembered with much fondness.

Festa di Natale

This year, I am very excited to announce a new endeavor between IHL and our member Nancy Perrelli who generously has given her time and talents to bake an assortment of Christmas cookies from family recipes, old and new recipes and some of her very favorites. They will be packaged for sale and can be purchased at the Festa to keep and enjoy for yourself, gifts for neighbors and families, etc. Nancy will also provide a tray for the evening's raffle as well as samples to enjoy during the Festa. Nancy was prominently featured in a Washington Post article for her prolific baking skills but more importantly her spirit of generosity. Please read further into the Newsletter for information about our first ever Christmas Cookie Exchange and light tea lunch on the afternoon of the Festa. Some new things to look forward to, but don't forget Dennis' homemade Egg Nog, the return of our Hot Chocolate Bar, adorable elves AND that special visitor..... Our flyer with all of the details for the evening's big event is also at the end of the Newsletter with a checklist below.

In this issue, Past President and Publicity Chairman Joe La Marca submitted a delightful article about his Italian/Cajun Christmases growing up in New Orleans. I think you will all enjoy his writings in a way only he can relay. We certainly get a very vivid picture of his youth! Grazie Giuseppe e Buon Natale!

*Con affetto!
Coletta*

Festa di Natale Checklist

- ✓ *Call John or Laura by December 8th to RSVP for children*
- ✓ *Bring a Pot Luck Authentic Italian Meal: Entrée / Side / Dessert*
- ✓ *Bring an unwrapped toy (\$10 or less) for Hospital for Sick Children*
- ✓ *Rehearse Christmas Carols to sing*
- ✓ *Get excited for a special Visitor*



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Master of Ceremonies: Roy Schender
Mistress of Ceremonies: Renee Signorelli

Education Chair: Elisabetta Lazarte
Webmaster: Joe La Marca

Lodge Member Serving on the Grand Council of Virginia: Marianne Hallahan



SAVE THE DATES - FUTURE LODGE EVENTS

December 9	GLVA Quarterly Meeting	11:00 A.M.	Giuseppe Verdi Lodge
December 12	Lunch Bunch	Noon	Maggiano's Springfield Towne Center
December 15	Christmas Cookie Exchange & Light Tea Lunch	Noon – 2:00 P.M.	Knights of Columbus Hall
December 15	Festa di Natale	6:00 P.M.	Knights of Columbus Hall
December 25	<i>Feast of the Nativity</i>		
January 1, 2019	<i>New Year's Day</i>		
January 9	Lunch Bunch	Noon	TBD
January 12	White Elephant Sale	Noon – 3:00 P.M.	Knights of Columbus Hall
January 16	Council Meeting	7:00 P.M.	George Mason Library
February 9	Casino Night	6:30 P.M.	Knights of Columbus Hall
February 13	Lunch Bunch	Noon	TBD
February 14	<i>St. Valentine's Day</i>		
February 20	Council Meeting	7:00 P.M.	George Mason Library
March 9	Installation of Officers Ceremony & Dinner	4:00 P.M.	Knights of Columbus Hall
March 13	Lunch Bunch	Noon	TBD
March 20	Council Meeting	7:00 P.M.	George Mason Library

Buon Compleanno DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS



Rosalie Ciccotelli	December 2
Frank Bonsiero	December 5
Rosalind Michaelangelo	December 5
Peter Ognibene	December 9
Palmer DeMeo	December 19
Steve Lipton	December 21
Augie Taormina	December 24

LODGE ANNOUNCEMENTS

The December Christmas Lunch Bunch will be held on Wednesday, December 12th at noon at Maggiano's Italian Ristorante located in the Springfield Towne Center off of Loisdale Road. Excellent antipasti and a large menu to choose from. If you order certain pasta dishes you may take home another one at no additional cost. Maggiano's is always nicely decorated for the Christmas season so please join your fellow IHLers for a festive holiday lunch. Call Dennis at 703-354-2454 or email him at delillo1@verizon.net if you plan to attend so he can include you in the reservation.

FIRST EVER CHRISTMAS COOKIE EXCHANGE - *To continue the holiday cheer, IHL will hold a Christmas Cookie Exchange and light tea lunch on December 15th from noon to 2:00 p.m. at the St. Leo Knights of Columbus Hall. Join Dawn and Colette for some fellowship as we enjoy a light lunch and exchange Christmas cookies. Lunch will be provided but please bring two dozen home-baked or good quality bakery cookies for exchanging with other bakers. Members, non-members, family and guests are welcome for this festive event. Dress in your holiday attire and please provide your own container to return home with your delicious exchanges! RSVP to Dawn at falsinotti@yahoo.com*

The IHL Italian Language Group monthly meet-up is generally held on the fourth Saturday of each month but due to the Thanksgiving Holiday and Christmas season, our language group will meet this evening, December 1st at 6:00 p.m. at the home of Dolly Daugherty for what promises to be "an evening of fun and games for mastering Italian in a group". We are always looking for new members with some knowledge of Italian language to join us at our monthly Language Group meeting, enjoy the camaraderie, the food, the value of vocabulary building and the practice of conversing in Italian. Contact joe.lamarca@italianheritagelodge.org for more information about becoming part of our language group and perhaps attending this evening - last minute - for some fun with your fellow lodge brothers and sisters. Potential new group members are always welcome to join us!

WALK-A-THON - *This is the time of year that we sponsor our Walk-A-Thon for our three charities - Alzheimer's, Cooley's Anemia and Autism. If you were unable to attend the Walk-A-Thon in November, a group of us met at Fair Oaks Mall and walked the mall distance to the other end where we met up with our friends and members for lunch at Sushi On. To those of you who joined with us and to those who could not, your generous participation was much appreciated. Our form for contributions is attached at the end of the Newsletter. This fundraiser is on-going until mid-December. At that time, our Financial Secretary will forward your contributions to the Virginia OSIA Foundation for disbursement to the three charities. All of the information is on the flyer, but please call either Colette or Eleanor if you have any questions.*

Our member Elisabetta Lazarte is the Program Director and Instructor of the Italian Language Program of Northern Virginia. She is announcing that, through the assistance of John Asiello and the Knights of Columbus of St. Leo Church, her language program will be holding NEW BEGINNER Winter classes at the Knights of Columbus Hall. Please call Elisabetta at 703-887-1995 or email her at bsmile24@aol.com for information on the Winter session classes (January 23, 2019 to April 10, 2019, 3:30 p.m. to 5:45 p.m.), more information on registering, and other classes offered in the program. We are trying to form new Beginner classes in the Fairfax area, where the learning environment is fun, the classes are small and personal, and all aspects of the Italian culture are integrated into the language classes.

I am happy to report that all donations for the House of Mercy Food Pantry were handed in in time for the Thanksgiving holiday. Once again, your generosity outshone from previous years as the value of the food donated increased. Grazie a tutti!

*On Saturday, January 12, 2019, we will hold the White Elephant event in the **afternoon** - Noon to 3:00 p.m. as a pot luck lunch. Start getting ready now with all of your items for sale, re-gifted, old, new, used, unwanted, whatever can be sold by our distinguished auctioneers for the benefit of the lodge. This is always a fun event that draws in many items generously donated by our members and guests.*

National Organization of Italian American Women - Our member, Sharon Strauchs, passed along this information for the NOIAW's Epiphany Celebration Honoring Three Wise Women. Sharon is a member who says that these events are fantastic and is looking for others to carpool with. This event is Thursday, January 10, 2018 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. and is being held at Maggiano's Little Italy in Washington, D.C. Visit their website at noiaw@noiaw.org for more information. Sharon's contact information is Sharon@tlc-nv.com

The Election of Lodge Officers for 2019-2020

The Lodge will elect officers early next year for the 2019-2020 term. The following timetable is set out in the Lodge's By-Laws for the election of officers:

November, 2018 - The President appointed three members to serve on the Nominating Committee: Dennis Lillo (Chairman), Marianne Hallahan and Joseph Cardinale

December, 2018 - The Chairman of the Nominating Committee shall report the nominations from the Committee. (No nominations can be made from the floor at this meeting.)

January, 2019 - The January Newsletter will carry the results of the Nominating Committee. Members may nominate from the floor at the January lodge meeting.

February, 2019 - Elections are held - no more nominations are permitted except in the case of withdraw.

March, 2019 - The newly elected officers are installed.

Any lodge members interested in serving on the Italian Heritage Lodge council for this period please notify a member of the Nominating Committee of your desire to serve on the council for the 2019-2020 term .

Five Fishes on Christmas Eve? La Befana on Epiphany Eve? You're Kidding, Right?

By Joe La Marca

Since I joined our order it has become obvious to me that the way we in my home town celebrated Christmas during my childhood was probably very different from most OSDIA members. I grew up in the 1940s and 1950s in a small rural southeastern Louisiana town called Independence in which probably 95% of the citizens were Sicilian immigrants or their descendants. Okay, the African-Americans in town were not of Sicilian descent, but I clearly remember some of the older ones speaking the language.

Santa certainly did not come down chimneys in south Louisiana in those days. Fireplaces were for heat, which we had in abundance even during Christmas. In fact, I am pretty sure I saw my first fireplace when I went to Denver at age 22. **West** of the Mississippi River *Papa Noel* visited the Cajun towns in a pirogue filled with gifts as he paddled down the bayous. (A pirogue is a Cajun boat like a canoe, but harder to stand up in safely.) In my rural town **east** of the river, well, my father said he simply let Santa in the back door.

La Befana? I never heard of her until I her impersonator appeared at the first lodge Christmas party I attended. In Independence we also had none of the so called "Seven Fishes" on Christmas Eve. For one thing, cod do not swim in the nearby bayous, lakes, and gulf; and I never saw squid or eel on a plate until I went to Italy. Sure, we had plenty sliced eggplant simmering in olive oil, we had spaghetti and meatballs, spaghetti and cucuzzi, and, yes, "pasta fazool". Yet, at Christmas like any other time we ate the cuisine of our neighboring towns--fried chicken, oyster jambalaya, and shrimp gumbo. Our wine was made from strawberries. I think you need a hill to grow grapes. Have you ever seen the terrain of "swamp east Looziana?"

Other than a very occasional bowl of ice cream I do not remember anyone in my south Louisiana Sicilian town ever eating dessert. I do recall two types of traditional cookies—those stuffed with figs and some little hard anisette ones colored red and green at Christmas. However, I rarely ate those cookies for fear of breaking a tooth. You can imagine my surprise when I went to Sicily and saw all those fabulous cakes and pies and learned that Sicilians were famous for their desserts. What was wrong with those *figli di Sicilia* in Independence, Louisiana?

Like other areas of the country big Italian families got together at Christmas time in all-day celebrations. Most visitors were relatives; but some were just other *paesani* who drifted in and out all day and evening before returning to their own family feasts. On Christmas Eve, though, those were men and older children, for most women stayed home to prepare the feast to be consumed after midnight mass—no eating before communion, you will recall. Furthermore, I only remember the women and us children attending midnight mass. On Christmas Eve the men in Independence stayed home to play [Bourré](#), the Cajun gambling card game. They started drinking whiskey early in the evening, and by the time we midnight churchgoers returned the men were *molto ubriachi*.

Buon Natale, y'all!



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SUBJECT: Walk-A-Thon for Cooley’s Anemia, Alzheimer’s and Autism

A primary function of the Italian Heritage Lodge (IHL) of Fairfax is to act as a fraternal organization to benefit our community. One of the ways we accomplish this each year is to donate funds to three specific charities ---- Cooley’s Anemia, Alzheimer’s, and Autism. This year, our members participated in a Walk-A-Thon on **Saturday, November 10, 2018** at Fair Oaks Mall as a fundraiser for these charities. We ask that you donate \$10, \$20 or whatever you can afford to support these worthy causes. All funds collected will be donated through the Grand Lodge of Virginia Foundation, Order Sons of Italy in America (OSIA), to one of the above-mentioned charities. **The deadline for your donations is December 15th.**

***Make checks payable to the Virginia OSIA Foundation with a mention in the memo line as for which charity/charities the donation is designated. 100% of the funds collected will be forwarded to the Virginia OSIA Foundation. Please mail your fully tax deductible contributions to:**

**Italian Heritage Lodge of Fairfax #2517
 C/O Mr. Dennis Lillo
 5104 Colebrook Place
 Alexandria VA 22312**

Keep a copy of the form below as your receipt. I want to thank you in advance for your generosity and your support for our charitable causes.

Mille grazie,

Coletta Sciscilo, President, IHL

Receipt: Grand Lodge of Virginia Foundation, Order Sons of Italy in America
 5352 Sir Barton Drive
 Virginia Beach, VA 23462

Cooley ’s Anemia	_____	Amount	_____
Alzheimer’s	_____	Amount	_____
Autism	_____	Amount	_____
Date:			

ITALIAN HERITAGE LODGE
FESTA DÙ NATALE
DECEMBER 15, 2018 - 6:00 P.M.

This year's *Festa di Natale* is Saturday evening, December 15, 2018. Due to the extended length of the program and the young age of the primary audience, the social will begin at 6:00 PM. For the younger attendees, the program will include a reading of *'Twas the Night Before Christmas* and all can join in as we sing Christmas carols. There will also be a guest from the North Pole.

It is **especially important** that you call in your reservation since Santa Claus will be making a surprise visit with a present for each child 12 and under. Members who are bringing children 12 and under are asked to call John or Laura Asiello at 703-321-7840 or email jfasiello@outlook.com to provide the name, gender, and age of the child, no later than **December 8, 2018**. This will give Santa time to select a gift for each child.

DINNER: The meal will be a pot luck dinner of authentic Italian food. Please bring a traditional Italian entree or side dish, perhaps one of Nonna's family recipes, that will feed at least 6 to 8 people as there is usually a large turnout for this event. Anyone wanting to bring something additional can bring your Italian homemade dessert or an appetizer. Wine and beverages will be provided for a small donation, including homemade Eggnog as well as a hot chocolate bar.

GIVE A GIFT: In keeping with the giving spirit of the holiday, members have the opportunity to participate in the following: each child or any other member or guest attending the meeting is invited to bring and place under the tree an unwrapped gift costing not more than \$10.00. The hospital, where the gifts will be taken, has requested that the gifts not be wrapped as they cannot give the children gifts without inspecting them. The gifts brought to the party will be taken to the Hospital for Sick Children the following week, just in time for Christmas.



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