

As of 18 March 2001

**Bylaws of the Italian Heritage,  
Order Sons of Italy in America,  
Lodge No. 2517**

**Article I  
Organization**

**Sec. 1. Name.** The name of this organization shall be the Italian Heritage Lodge No. 2517.

**Sec. 2. Status.** This Lodge is a non-profit organization and the distribution of any part of its assets or surplus upon dissolution shall not benefit any member.

**Sec. 3. Authority.** This Lodge shall be governed by the Supreme Constitution, General Laws and Judicial Code; the Bylaws of the Grand Lodge of Virginia; the Grand Lodge Ritual; these Bylaws; special rules of order enacted by the Lodge; and Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised; listed in the order of their precedence.

**Article II  
Purposes**

**Sec. 1. General Purpose.** To enroll in its membership all persons of Italian birth or descent and all others as prescribed in Article III of these Bylaws, regardless of religious faith or political affiliation, who believe in the fundamental concept that society is based upon the principles of law and order, and who adhere to a form of government founded on the Constitution of the United States of America, which government rests upon the proposition that all people are created equal and functions through the consent of the governed.

**Sec. 2. Statement of Purpose.** Our purpose in this lodge lies in the knowledge that we are truly brothers and sisters in the eyes of God, and in the sense that we share a common heritage that is wealthy in tradition and cultural expression. Through this common bond we can maintain and nurture the rich patrimony of our forefathers and savor the fruits of their legacy.

**Sec. 3. Specific Purposes.** To engage only in worthy, dignified, and respectful activities that will:

- a. Keep alive the spiritual attachment to the traditions of the land of our ancestors.
- b. Encourage the dissemination of Italian culture in the United States.

- c. Defend and uphold the prestige of the people of Italian birth or descent in America.
- d. Promote the moral and intellectual well being of our membership.
- e. Encourage the active participation of our membership in the political, social, and civic life of our communities.
- f. Organize, establish, and support benevolent and social welfare institutions for the protection and assistance of our members, their dependents, and the needy in general, with such material aid as we are able to give.
- g. Initiate and organize movements for charitable and humanitarian purposes, and to join and support similar meritorious movements initiated by other organizations or groups.

### **Article III Membership**

#### **Sec. 1. Types of Membership.**

- a. REGULAR members: those of Italian lineage, their spouses, widows, widowers, and divorced spouses of current or former members, their adopted children, and their spouses.
- b. SOCIAL members: those not qualifying as regular members, not to exceed 25% of the total membership of the Lodge.
- c. Other membership classifications as designated in the Supreme General Laws of the OSIA.

#### **Sec 2. Application Procedures.**

- a. All candidates for membership shall execute an official application which must bear the signature of a member who vouches that the candidate meets all the qualifications for membership.
- b. The candidate shall become a member when a paid application has been approved by the Lodge Membership.
- c. Candidates for membership shall not be less than 18 years of age.
- d. Transfer of members from another Lodge is subject to approval by the Lodge Membership.

#### **Sec. 3. Rights and Duties.**

- a. REGULAR members may participate in discussion, make proposals, vote on all matters, be elected to office and exercise any other rights and privileges accorded them by the Lodge, the Grand Lodge, and the Supreme Lodge.
- b. SOCIAL members may exercise the rights and privileges accorded them by the Lodge, the Grand Lodge, and the Supreme Lodge. Social members may participate in social, cultural and athletic activities of the Lodge, including service on committees, may attend regular and social meetings of the Lodge but shall not introduce motions, vote or hold office.

- c. All members are required to recognize the authorities of the Order, to obey the laws of the Order, to support the works of the Order, and to pay dues and assessments of the Lodge.

#### **Sec. 4. Conduct and Behavior.**

No member of the Order shall resort to any civil court to enforce any claim, demand, right or cause of action over applications of the Laws of the Order, which he may have against any Lodge, Grand Lodge or Supreme Lodge, or against any of their respective institutions, or against any of the officers as such, unless and until he shall have pursued and exhausted all remedies provided by the laws of the Order.

### **Article IV Financial Affairs**

#### **Sec. 1. Income.**

- a. The Lodge derives its income from fees, dues, and assessments imposed by the Assembly, and receipts from Lodge activities.
- b. Dues shall be paid annually on the anniversary month of the members' admission to the lodge.
- c. Fees and dues may be reviewed annually by the Executive Council of the Lodge within 60 days after they assume office. Any suggested changes shall be subject to approval of the Assembly following prior written notice.
- d. The Lodge shall maintain at least one account known as the 'General Fund'.
- e. The General Fund shall be maintained in accounts for savings and checking accounts as determined by the membership.
- f. Unless otherwise specified by the membership or the Executive Council, the proceeds of all events that the Lodge sponsors and the public participates shall be placed in the General Fund.
- g. Chairpersons of events that handle monies shall keep complete record of income and expenses. A detailed report shall be furnished to the Financial Secretary. The Chairperson, with the monies advanced by the Executive Council, may open a temporary bank account, in the name of the event, if he or she deems that it will facilitate this endeavor.

#### **Sec. 2. Disbursements.**

- a. All disbursements, other than those from a special account, in this section shall be made from the General Fund.
- b. Disbursements necessary for the administration of the Lodge may be authorized by the Executive Council. Per capita taxes and other monies collected for the Grand Lodge shall be disbursed without the necessity of Executive Council or Assembly approval. All disbursements other than the above exceptions require the approval of the Assembly.

- c. Contributions in the name of the Lodge shall be made each year to charities chosen by the Executive Council and in the amounts proposed to and approved by the Assembly at Annual Round Chair meeting.
- d. The President or the Vice President acting as President, can authorize up to \$100 without the council's prior approval. The council must be informed by the next council meeting.

**Sec. 3. Fiscal Year.** Financial matters of the Lodge shall be conducted on the basis of a fiscal year commencing April 1 and ending March 31 of the succeeding year.

**Sec. 4. Excused from Dues.** Exception from any part or portion or total amount of dues shall be based on special circumstances, ie, Financial Need, Honorary, etc, and approved by the executive council.

**Sec. 5. Default.**

- a. If membership dues are not paid within three (3) months of the date they are due, that member shall be considered to be in default. Any member in default shall be stricken from the rolls of membership. However, at least 30 days prior to the date of striking, the member shall be sent a notice in writing by mail from the Financial Secretary, prepared by the Chairperson of the Membership Committee.
- b. Expulsion may also occur by decision of the Committee of Arbitration in accordance with the Supreme Judicial Code.

**Article V  
Officers**

**Sec. 1. Elected Officers.** The Lodge shall have 24 elected members, of which 14 are elected officers, who are: President, Vice-President, Orator, Recording Secretary, Financial Secretary, Treasurer, 5 Trustees, 2 Master/Mistress of Ceremonies, Guard, 5 Arbitrators and 5 Alternate Arbitrators, listed in the order of their precedence.

**Sec. 2. Executive Council.** The President, Vice-President, the Immediate Past President, Orator, Recording Secretary, Financial Secretary, Treasurer, 5 Trustees, 2 Master/Mistress of Ceremonies, and the Guard, constitutes the Executive Council of the Lodge.

**Sec. 3. Officers Duties and Responsibilities.**

**a. President.**

- (1) Supervise the affairs and activities of the lodge.
- (2) Represent the lodge within the community.

- (3) Ensure that an annual budget and activities schedule are prepared.
- (4) Represent the lodge at all state and national functions.
- (5) Distribute all materials and information received from state and national.
- (6) Ensure the lodge's publication is mailed on time and write an article for each issue.
- (7) Make an annual report to the membership.
- (8) The president is ex-officio member of all committees, except for the Nominating and Arbitration Committees.

**b. Vice President.**

- (1) Acts, as necessary, in the absence of the president.
- (2) Assists the president.
- (3) Assists the various chairs, especially the Membership and Program-Activities Chairs.
- (4) Monitors the retention of members and takes corrective action to the executive council.

**c. Immediate Past President.**

- (1) Assists the President.
- (2) Assists the membership program.
- (3) Assists new member orientation.

**d. Orator.**

- (1) Adjudicates by-law questions, as necessary.
- (2) Assists the Arbitration Committee, as necessary.

**e. Recording Secretary.**

- (1) Prepares agenda with the President.
- (2) Maintains records of the meetings.

**f. Financial Secretary.**

- (1) Assists with the budget preparations.
- (2) Prepares Per Capita reports and sends to State quarterly, in coordination with the Membership Chair, on time.
- (3) Signs the membership cards and expulsion letters.
- (4) Maintains the official membership roster of the Lodge.

**g. Treasurer.**

- (1) Establishes the budget.
- (2) Helps establish project budgets with the Chairpersons.
- (3) Reports the lodge's financial status to the Executive Council and the general membership monthly.
- (4) Maintains a working cash flow.
- (5) Sends to the President copies of all account statements.
- (6) Maintains finance records in accordance with standard acceptable accounting standards.

**h. Trustee.**

- (1) Reviews lodge financial records once a year.
- (2) Oversees the activities of the Executive Council.

**i. Master/Mistress of Ceremonies.**

- (1) Ceremonial Officer of the Lodge
- (2) Assist the President, in conformity of the laws and in ritual form during:
  - a. the Installation of new Officers
  - b. Initiation of new members
  - c. Other Official ceremonies and functions

**j. Guard.**

- (1) Door keeper of the local lodge.
- (2) Admit those to the lodge assembly that belong and exclude others that do not.
- (3) Helps keep order whenever needed during Official Functions of the lodge.

**k. Arbitrator.**

In the event of an arbitration incident, the Committee of Arbitration will adjudicate those issues. None of these Committee Members shall be officers involved in the incident or the president.

**l. Alternate Arbitrator.**

Fills the responsibilities of an Arbitrator if an Arbitrator is unavailable to serve for whatever reason.

**Sec. 4. Assistants.** The President may appoint assistants to the Officers of the Lodge with confirmation of the Executive Council, and the President shall also assign their duties.

## **Article VI Elections**

**Sec. 1. Election of Officers/Members.** The officers/members shall be elected in February for a term of one (1) year or until their successors are installed. The officers shall assume the duties of their office upon installation during the month of March.

**Sec. 2. Eligibility.** To be elected President, a member must have served at least one year on the Executive Council. To be elected Vice-President, Orator, Recording Secretary, Financial Secretary, Treasurer or Arbitrator, a candidate must have been a member of the Lodge at least one year. Candidates for all other elected offices must have been members of the Lodge for at least six months. The provisions of this Section shall not apply where eligible and willing candidates are not available.

**Sec. 3. Nominations.**

- a. At the December meeting, the Chairman of the Nominating Committee shall report the nominations agreed upon by a majority of the Committee. No nominations from the floor may be made at this meeting and the report of

the Committee shall be transmitted to each member before the January meeting.

- b. At the January meeting, members may nominate from the floor additional candidates for any office. If members are nominated from the floor, election will take place at the February meeting. If there are no additional nominations from the floor, the election can take place at the January meeting.
- c. At the February meeting, no additional nominations shall be permitted except in the case of death or withdrawal of previously nominated candidates.

**Sec. 4. Needed for Election.** The candidate receiving a majority of the votes cast shall be declared elected.

**Sec. 5. Installation.** Newly elected officers shall be installed during the month of March.

**Sec. 6. State Delegates.**

- a. In February of each odd-numbered year, the Lodge shall nominate delegates and alternates to represent the Lodge at the biennial Grand Convention, held on the fourth weekend of June. Further nominations and election of delegates and alternates shall be held at the next regular meeting.
- b. The State Delegates are elected in the proportion specified in the Grand Bylaws. The Lodge shall elect one (1) Alternate Delegate for each State Delegate. Alternates shall replace State Delegates who cannot attend the Convention. The president shall serve as Chairman of the State Delegates.
- c. The Recording Secretary shall mail to the State Recording Secretary at least two months before the Convention a list of the names and addresses of the newly elected State Delegates and Alternate Delegates of the Lodge.

**Sec. 7. Special Election.** Whenever a vacancy occurs among the elected officers, it shall be filled by holding a special election at the next regular or special meeting. Written notice shall be given to the membership at least 30 days prior to any special election. Until this special election is held, the President can appoint a temporary officer.

**Sec. 8. Voting Eligibility.** Only regular members in good standing may vote.

**Sec. 9. Term Limits.** Elected officers can only serve in the present office no more than two consecutive terms.

## **Article VII Committees**

**Sec.1. Types of Committees.** There shall be two types of committees, Standing and Special. Standing Committees are continuing, while Special Committees cease to exist upon completion of their specified tasks.

**Sec. 2. Chairperson.** Unless otherwise specified in these Bylaws, the President shall appoint the Chair of all Standing and Special Committees, and shall outline the duties to be performed.

**Sec.3. Standing Committees.** Standing Committees are the Programs Committee, Activities Committee, Membership Committee, and the Scholarship Committee.

**Sec. 4. Programs Committee.**

- a. The Programs Committee Chair is appointed by the President and reports to the executive council.
- b. The purpose shall be the planning and execution of the monthly programs to include long-range planning.

**Sec. 5. Activities Committee.**

- a. The Activities Committee Chair is appointed by the President and reports to the executive council.
- b. The purpose shall be the planning and execution of the long-range planning of activities, other than the monthly meetings.

**Sec. 6. Membership Committee.**

- a. The Membership Committee Chair is appointed by the President and reports to the executive council.
- b. The purpose is to administer the membership program and enhance retention.

**Sec. 7. Scholarship Committee.**

- a. The Scholarship Committee Chair is appointed by the President and reports to the executive council.
- b. The purpose is to administer the scholarship program.

**Sec. 8. Special Committees.** Appointed and organized as needed.



**Sec. 9. Committee of Arbitration.** In the event of an arbitration incident, the Committee of Arbitration will adjudicate those issues. None of these Committee Members shall be officers involved in the incident or the president.

**Sec. 10. Nominating Committee.** At the meeting in November of each year, the Assembly shall elect five of its members to serve as the Nominating Committee. No current officers or persons seeking office should serve as members of the Nominating Committee. The Committee shall elect its own Chairperson.

**Sec. 11. Establishing or Disbanding Committees.** All Standing and Special Committees may be established or disbanded by the Assembly or the Executive Council as deemed necessary to carry on the work of the Lodge.

## **Article VIII Meetings**

### **Sec. 1. Regular Meetings.**

- a. Regular meetings of the Lodge shall be held on the second Saturday of each month except when changed by the Executive Council or the Assembly.
- b. Duration of the monthly business meeting shall be limited to one half hour except when elections and Round Table Meetings are required. To comply with this time requirement, the Presiding Officer is authorized to defer any subjects to the following monthly or Executive Council meeting.
- c. After the monthly business meeting, a program of social, cultural and fellowship activities will follow. Said program is the responsibility of the Programs Committee.
- d. Special meeting. As required. Shall be held when called by the President or when called by a properly signed written request of 1/3 of the regular members in good standing. All members will be notified prior to 7 days of the meeting.

**Sec. 2. Quorum.** For general membership meetings, not less the 10 regular members in good standing shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. For Council meetings, 8 elected officers shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

**Sec. 3. Order of Business.** The Order of Business at each regular business meeting shall be as follows:

- a. Opening Ritual. (prayer followed by pledge of allegiance, reading of the statement of purpose and roll call of officers).
- b. Minutes. (To be approved as published subject to corrections to be brought up at the next Executive Council).

- c. Report of the Treasury.
- d. Communication. All on-going activities.
- e. Applications for membership. (as published in monthly mailing) (If applicable.)
- f. Balloting for Candidates. (If applicable).
- g. Initiation of Candidates. (A special ceremony will take place when a group of suitable size can be formed) (If applicable).
- h. Unfinished Business, Committee Reports, and New Business. (Presiding Officer presents progress reports of committees and decisions of the Executive Council after which the Assembly votes on all decisions, one at a time).
- i. Welfare of the Order (maximum of five speakers permitted two minutes each).
- j. Adjournment.

**Sec. 4. Forfeiture of Office.** Any officer who is absent from three consecutive regular meetings of the Executive Council or from three consecutive regular meetings of the Assembly, unless excused, forfeits the Office. Appeals may be made to the Committee of Arbitration.

**Sec. 5. Executive Council.**

- a. The Executive Council has the authority to make decisions on all aspects of the Lodge activities. Certain matters from the council meetings will be reported to the general membership. Executive Council meetings shall be held monthly at a time and place determined by the Executive Council and published in the minutes and announced at the Assembly. Member's participation and discussion on all subjects is encouraged. Only officers can vote at the Executive Council. All items approved by the Executive Council shall be brought to the Assembly for approval.
- b. A majority of the Executive Council shall constitute a quorum. (8 of 15)

**Article IX  
Amendments**

**Sec. 1. Procedure of Amendment.** Any regular member may propose any amendment to these Bylaws by setting forth the exact language of the proposed amendment in writing and submitting it to the Recording Secretary. A Special Bylaws Committee shall be formed to prepare a report to be submitted to the membership, containing its recommendations concerning the proposal it has received within 60 days.

**Sec. 2. Voting.** These Bylaws may be amended by the affirmative vote of not less than two-thirds (2/3) of the members in good standing present and voting at any regular or special meeting of the Lodge. Before any vote is taken, however, all members must be advised in writing of the proposed amendment(s) together with a notice of the time and place of the meeting at which such amendments(s) will be voted upon.

**Sec. 3. Approval.** Following approval by the Assembly, these Bylaws and any amendments thereto become effective upon approval by the Grand Council.

## **Article X Special Rules of Order**

**Sec. 1.** In addition to the Supreme Constitution, Bylaws and Rules of the Order, in nearly every society resolutions of a permanent nature are occasionally adopted, which are binding on the society until they are rescinded or modified. These are called Special Rules of Order, and can be adopted by a majority vote at any meeting. After they have been adopted, they cannot be modified at the same session except by a reconsideration. At any future session they can be suspended, modified, or rescinded by a majority vote. The Special Rules of Order, then, comprise those rules of a society which have been adopted like ordinary resolutions, without the previous notice, etc., required for Bylaws, and, consequently future sessions of the society are at liberty to terminate them whenever they please. No standing rule or other resolution can be adopted which conflicts with the Constitution or Bylaws or Rules of the Order.

**Date of Lodge Approval:** \_\_\_\_\_

**President's Signature and Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Grand Lodge Approval:** \_\_\_\_\_