

Volume 8
Issue 3
Winter 2026

*A note from the
Editor:*

***Benvenuto
inverno!***

*Ciao a tutti!
Even though the
Fall months are
behind us now, that
time of year bears
the opportunities
for us to honor our
heritage during
Italian Heritage
Month and
celebrate
Christopher
Columbus in
October, salute our
Veterans with all of
the genuine
thankfulness and
gratitude in our
hearts in November,
and relax and enjoy
our Christmas
holidays with family
and friends, while
making wonderful
memories. We
cannot ever put a
price on the times
we share with them,
and I so appreciate
you sharing stories
and pictures of your
recent events with
all of us.*

*For future issues,
please submit
articles and pictures
to:*

[colette.sciscilo@
gmail.com](mailto:colette.sciscilo@gmail.com)

il Giornale

Newsletter for the Grand Lodge of Virginia
Order Sons & Daughters of Italy in America

A note from the Grand Lodge President

Cari amici,

Well, as hard as it is to believe we are already through the first month of 2026. I hope the past holidays and the New Year have been good and safe for everyone. I look forward to the rest of 2026 with a lot of excitement. We have so much to accomplish and with everyone's help we can make it a banner year for the lodges in Virginia. Of course, increasing membership should be job one for everyone. We can accomplish that in so many ways while still having fun in the process.

I must admit, as I watch the news every day, I can't help but being somewhat depressed. There are so many things going on in this country and the world that spark my depression. No matter what your political or religious beliefs are I just hope that everyone prays for peaceful and fair resolutions to our problems. Prayer, it seems to me, is the only solution to some of our problems. So, pray often so we can get these problems fixed with the help of the Almighty.

Just a quick update on Convention 2027. Larry Brennan is hard at work seeking a site in Williamsburg suitable for our convention. Other members have been contacted and asked to assist with different pieces of the convention. So, we're on the move and should have more information soon.

On a sad note, I'm sure most of you heard we recently lost not only a treasured member of Giuseppe Verdi Lodge, but the Grand Lodge of Virginia. Bea Sykes passed on December 11, 2025, just days before her 89th birthday. Bea had been active in the Grand lodge for many many years and in GVL for most of her life. She will be so deeply missed by all of us. I'm sure she (and Junny) will be watching over us as we go forward with the work of OSDIA.

Respectfully,

***Aldo Funai
Grand Lodge President***



ORDER
Sons and
Daughters
of Italy
IN AMERICA

Grand Lodge of Virginia Quarterly Meeting

The Grand Lodge of Virginia will meet for its quarterly meeting on *Sunday, March 15, 2026*.
The meeting will be held at the Giuseppe Verdi Lodge #315, 7342 Verdi Lane, Mechanicsville, VA.

Council members and lodge presidents are asked to arrive no later than 10:30 a.m.
for the Foundation meeting and meeting of the Lodge Presidents.



Festa Italiana D.C. was held on the weekend of October 4-5, 2025, at Tanger Outlets, National Harbor, MD. The inaugural event helped kick off Italian Heritage Month and was meant to draw people from the surrounding Washington, D.C. area for a two-day-long celebration of all things Italian, especially Italian food, culture and fun.

The free general admission festival featured a variety of local artisan vendors, authentic Italian cuisine, wine tastings, live music and included a special cooking demonstration from Galbani Cheese.

Festa Italiana D.C. had something for everyone!

Stay tuned for OSDIA's announcement for Festa Italiana D.C. 2026!

(Information provided by OSDIA.)

If you have the chance, take a few hours out of your day to see the new movie "Solo Mio". The music, scenery and language are all beautiful. You will see the Tuscan countrysides, vineyards, Roma's cityscape with all its bustling activities, and the Palio di Siena. Solo Mio is a "rom-com" featuring Kevin James, but there are a few unexpected twists and surprises! Rated PG.

The Grand Lodge of Virginia's new website is up and running! The website address is:

www.vaosdia.org

The Virginia OSIA Foundation 2026 Scholarships

The 2026 Virginia OSIA Foundation scholarship application is now available.

Please read the application carefully and be sure you have all documents submitted by the given date.

Scholarship applications should be available at that time

Application MUST be postmarked no later than April 15, 2026

To access the 2026 OSIA Foundation Scholarship Application in either Word Version or PDF Version, please visit the GLVA website: www.vaosdia.org and pull down the Scholarship tab.

If you have questions, please contact Kathy A. Drummond, Scholarship Committee Chair, at anello1@verizon.net or 703-368-5039

Local Lodges

Peninsula Italian American Lodge #2145

October 2025 - December 2025

(Submitted by Beverly Amante)

In October of 2025, Bob Amante had the bright idea that, for our Columbus Day Celebration, we should have a special 5-course meal for the members. For the second year in a row, members of our lodge prepared a 5-course dinner for our Columbus Day Celebration. The meal consisted of:

- Appetizer:*** **Ricotta montata ricoperta di miele e pistacchi con cracker**
(Whipped ricotta covered in honey & pistachios with crackers)
- Soup:*** **Vellutata di zucca con salsiccia** (Cream of pumpkin soup with Sausage)
- Salad:*** **Insalata tritata Italiana** (Italian Chopped Salad)
- Main Course:*** **Maiale alla Milanese**(Pork or Chicken Milanese)
Tortelline tricolore al pesto fresco (Tri Color tortellini with Fresh Pesto)
- Dessert:*** **Limoncello Tiramisu**

We had special guests at this meeting. They included Mary Louise Smith, Arthur Smith, and Virginia Bowe, all from Guiseppe Verdi Lodge, Col. Michele Strippoli (Italian Liaison Officer stationed at US Army TRADOC), and members of the DeLucia family which included Jim & Terry's granddaughter Kylee, Angela DeLucia (member) and her new husband Alex, and Jim's brother Ralph and his wife, Susan.



*The cooks from left to right:
Barry & Briana Robison, appetizer
Bev & Bob Amante, main course &
dessert*

*Jim & Terry DeLucia, soup
Michelle Romanello, salad*

In addition to the meal, Jim gave a presentation to the members about the five Italian soldiers who are buried in the Hampton Veterans Cemetery. He gave the members information about the soldiers and what their lives were like as POW's.

The third event at this meeting, and to all of us the most important, was the presentation of OSDIA 25+ and 50+ pins to 11 of our members. They have been loyal members of our lodge for 25 years or more. Many of them have served as council members and have been leaders in our lodge. Several of them have moved out of the area but continue to support PIAL #2145!



Sitting is our 50+ year member, Ginger Stay.

Standing (first row) Angela Tambone, Terry DeLucia & Anna D'Antonio.

Standing (back row) Jim DeLucia & Bob Mason.

Missing from the picture are members: Anthony Fecondo, Frank Tambone, Mary Ann Canale & Anne & Joe Caruso.

Once again PIAL #2145 had a busy November!

For more than 40 years, members of the Peninsula Italian American Lodge #2145 have participated in the wreath laying ceremony for the five Italian Soldiers who are buried in the Hampton National Cemetery in Phoebus.

At one point, there were two different ceremonies, one for the Germans laid to rest here and one for the Italians. Several years ago, the Italian & German Liaison Officers got together and decided to do a joint memorial service. The service was held on Friday, November 12th. We were lucky this year as it was a beautiful sunny day, but even with the sun, the wind and tree cover made it a bit chilly.

This is always a very touching ceremony. The lodge continues to encourage members to make the time to attend but, unfortunately, the number of attendees has declined mostly because there is some walking to get to the site which makes it hard for some of our older members.

This year Bob Mason read the *Soldiers Prayer* in English and Angela Tambone read it in Italian. Our current president, if they do not work, is usually the person who does the English *Soldiers Prayer*. Until his passing in 2024, Rinaldo Brolli read the Italian Version of the *Soldiers Prayer*. Since that time, Angela Tambone has taken over this honor.

Below are several photos from the event.



*Angela
Tambone
and
Bob
Mason*



Annual Thanksgiving Dinner

An annual PIAL tradition is to host a Thanksgiving dinner for our lodge members. This has become even more important in the last few years as many of our members are older and living alone so they no longer do the traditional Thanksgiving meal. We have been doing some version of this meal for as long as this writer has been a member of the lodge.

We used to serve both turkey and ham, but members decided that they wanted the ham instead of turkey. It's kind of a structured potluck. Whoever is in charge asks members to sign up to bring specific items. The lodge provided the ham, usually prepared by Jim & Terry DeLucia, mashed potatoes provided by Bob Mason (he makes the best mashed potatoes) and green beans provided by Bob Amante.

The wonderful thing about this potluck is that there are always plenty of leftovers and members are encouraged to bring a takeout container with them so that they can bring some home.

At this event we ask members to donate nonperishable food items that we donate to a local food pantry. This year's donations went to Immaculate Conception Catholic Church's food pantry. ICC distributes food to the needy from Tuesday to Thursday each week. They also have a drive through pick up one Saturday a month, and twice a month they have what they call Sunday Supper where people can come in and get a home cooked meal. Members of our lodge, Bob & Bev Amante and Jim & Terry DeLucia, cook for Sunday Supper once every two to three months.



PIAL #2145 – December Happenings

Our annual Christmas Party was held on Sunday, December 14th at the Beechwood Clubhouse. Member Nicole Varanavage, who manages the facility, and her children Phillip and Camela, helped with all the set up and breaking down. Other members who played an intricate part in the party's great success where: Barbara & Lee Jamilik, Bob Mason & Anna D'Antonio, the Wipperman family and our Santa, Bob Amato. Also, thanks to Larry Brennan for the use of his Santa suit.

Members feasted on a meal which included homemade soup, a main course and sides catered by Piccadilly Restaurant, and an ice cream bar. After the meal, the Wipperman family lead us in singing some Christmas Carols and member Angela Tambone sang a Christmas song in Italian. Of course, the highlight of the day was the visit from Santa! Even the adults got into the Christmas spirit!



Santa with excited children!
Standing: Beth & Carmela
Seated: Evelyn, David & Claire

*Santa (Bob Amato) with
 Mrs. Santa Marianne*



*Barry
&
Briana
Robison*



*Bob Mason
&
Anna
D'Antonio*



Bob & Bev Amante



Angela Tambone



Stasi Wipperman & her children lead our sing along.

Roma Lodge #254

September 2025 - December 2025

(Submitted by Marie M. Siebeking)

In September, we held our meeting on Monday, September 4th to celebrate Labor Day. We had a picnic with picnic food for which everyone enjoyed the company and the food. On the 27th we were all prepared to decorate our cars for the Neptune Festival Parade, but it was cancelled due to the weather. We enjoyed lunch and packed up all the decorations.



At our September meeting, a special award was given to a special woman. Lola Musarra was given a Certificate of Appreciation and a plaque for her **60 years** of membership at Roma Lodge. Lola was honored for her continuous dedication and her accomplishments over the past six decades. Lola's commitment and support played a vital role in Roma Lodge, and we are truly grateful for her and for her friendship. Lola is very knowledgeable of the history of the lodge. President Marie Siebeking presented the award to Lola.

Also at our September meeting, Congratulations Certificates and cup trophies were given to Daniel Konkel and Matthew Bonner, who led the Neptune Parade and carried the banner in 2024, and they were to do the same in 2025. They were at the lodge early on the day of the parade but unfortunately the parade was cancelled. They are very special and respectful and one day (who knows?) may become officers at Roma Lodge #254. President Siebeking presented the boys with their awards.





On Thursday, October 30th, Roma Lodge participated in the food collection for the **Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore** that was sponsored by WAVY 10 News. Ten bags and two boxes of food were packed and delivered by Roma Lodge members President Siebeking, Paul Siebeking, Anthony Alfano, Florence Alfano, Ellie Bove, Tae Jackson, and Yana Bonner.



Roma Lodge #254 Halloween "Trunk or Treat" with New Hope Church on 11/5/2025

On November 5, 2025, Roma Lodge participated with **New Hope Fellowship Church** on a Halloween Trunk or Treat in the Roma Lodge parking lot from 6:00-8:00 PM. We presented a check to the church for \$800.00. (The event had to be cancelled from the original date of October 29th due to the weather.) We had several members who responded and decorated their car trunks. It was a fun night. Approximately 150 children responded.



Our Christmas party was held on Sunday, December 7, 2025. Approximately 86 members and guests purchased tickets. Eight members from the Peninsula Italian American Lodge attended. The hall looked festive and the food, catered by Primo's Restaurant was great. Entertainer, Frank Cubillo, "Frank Sings Frank", sang and danced with some of the ladies. A good time was had by all. Thanks to all the members who spent several hours setting up and making the event a great Christmas Party. And thank you to Trustee Judy Martin for donating the dessert for the event.



On Friday, December 12th President Siebeking and Paul Siebeking delivered 125 Christmas Pinecone decorations made by the pinecone crafters over several months, to **Luther Manor Nursing Home**. The director said this was great and she said we really provided the residents a Very Merry Christmas.



Tuesday Group Working on Christmas Pinecone for Donation to Luther Manor on 12/12/25

Italian Heritage Lodge #2517

September 2025 – December 2025

(Submitted by Coletta Sciscilo)

Mamma Mia! In the time since our last *il Giornale*, IHL members have been enjoying our monthly events, both fun and interesting to all.

The lodge was blessed to see an increase of new members over these months who have come to us from the Festa Italiana D.C., advertising, word of mouth, and common friendships. It has been wonderful getting to know these new *amici* just in this short time.

Our annual **House of Mercy Food Pantry** drive in October and November saw our members once again generously donate foods to families in our local community. All donations were delivered before the Thanksgiving holiday.

IHL members volunteered to staff a table at the inaugural event, **Festa Italiana D.C.**, in early October. It was a beautiful Fall weekend and who would not mind welcoming festival goers and surrounding themselves with the aromas of authentic Italian foods. This event was sponsored by Order Sons and Daughters of Italy in America. From this event we heard the news that our IHL Financial Secretary and GLVA State Recording Secretary, Steve Kramer, was asked by OSDIA to join the National Audit and Budget Committee. President Dawn Falsinotti was also invited to join the team of the Festa Italiana D.C. 2026 Planning Board.

IHL participated once again in the **Christopher Columbus Ceremony** in Washington, D.C. We were restricted to smaller participation this year due to the government shutdown going on at that time, so the ceremony took place at Casa Italiana.

Each year our members donate unwrapped gifts for the children who must remain in the hospital during the Christmas holidays. Again, the toy collection was amazing and no doubt thrilled all of those who received toys at the **Hospital for Sick Children** in Washington, D.C.

We also welcomed speakers who were very well received. Their topics were interesting and informative, and elicited great responses judging by the question-and-answer period following each of the Power Point presentations. We were honored to have Capt. (Ret.) Kathleen Principe Crockett who brought us back to a time of “The Italians of Washington from 1880 to 1940.” Guest Speaker Mike DeBonis, Senior Congress Editor for *Politico*, gave us a revealing look at the current political situations in Italy and Vatican City.

The following pages capture our most recent events through pictures that we hope you enjoy!



Mike DeBonis
Senior Congress Editor
of Politico

Mr. Mike DeBonis, Senior Congress Editor of *Politico*, received a warm welcome at our annual *IHL Meet & Greet Pasta Dinner* held in September. Our guest speaker was interesting and informative in his talk before the sizeable audience which included members, new members, and guests. He brought his expertise in local, national, and international politics, as a reporter and editor in several roles over his career. Mike’s topic for our *Meet & Greet Pasta Dinner* was the current political situations in Italy under the leadership of Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni and under Pope Leo, XIV, the shepherd of the Universal Church in Vatican City, and he did not disappoint with his detailed information on this vital subject, no doubt concerning to all listeners. Mike’s talk kept the attention of those in attendance; he answered questions and stayed on to join IHL for a delicious Italian dinner to further converse with us.

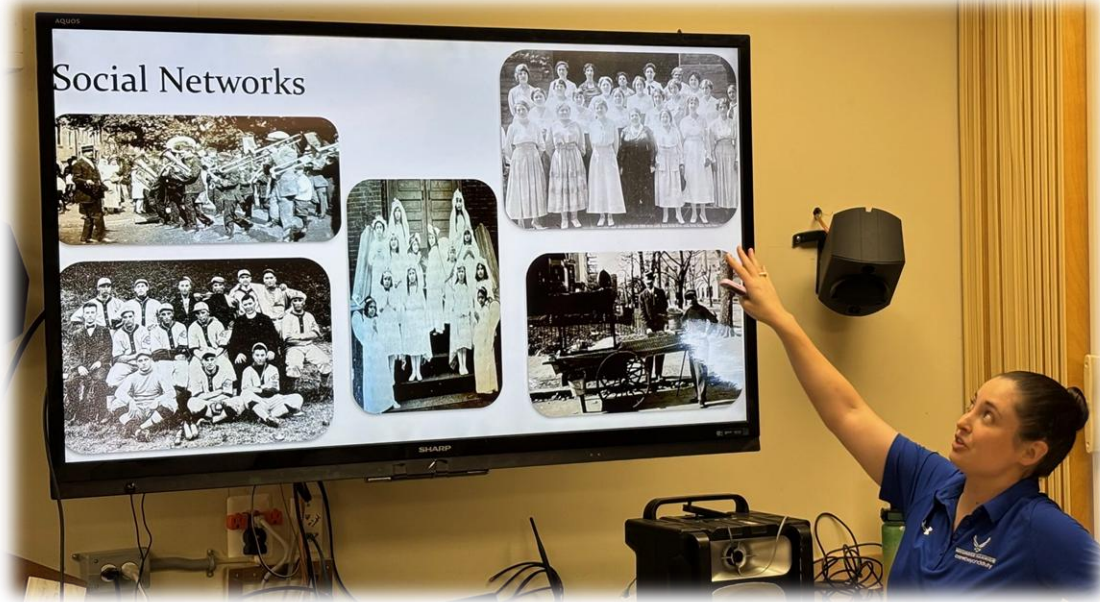


President Dawn Falsinotti presented a wreath on behalf of the Italian Heritage Lodge of Fairfax at the National Christopher Columbus Ceremony at Casa Italiana, Washington, D.C.





Our food donations to the House of Mercy Food Pantry collected at the October and November meetings “harvested” 63 pounds of food for the local community pantry.



The title of Kathleen’s Power Point presentation was “The Italians of Washington from 1880 to 1940” and explored how the early Italian community of Washington, D.C. developed differently from other East Coast Italian enclaves. For Kathleen, her research was a way to honor the sacrifices and traditions of those who came before us, to celebrate their resilience, and to ensure that their voices remain part of the city’s historical narrative.



Capt. (Ret.) Kathleen Principe Crockett, USAF

Festa di Natale



The photos above show the fun we all had celebrating *Festa di Natale* on December 6, 2026. We enjoyed dining and desserts, drinking Dennis' homemade Egnog (an IHL holiday tradition), a Christmas Carol sing along, thanks to Charles Santangelo, swapping fun and funny wrapped gifts, poinsettia raffles, the joy of giving to others and the fellowship we share not just during the holidays but all year round.



Dennis & Ellie Lillo making sure the children received our donations in time for Christmas.



The Absolute Best Cannoli In Italy Is Found In This Old-School Convent



By Martha Brennan

People are always in search of the very best things to eat when they travel, especially when visiting somewhere with a food scene as iconic as Italy's. Big plates of buttery ravioli, giant slices of oozing lasagne, freshly made cones topped with creamy scoops of gelato — the list of Italian delicacies to get through is never ending. But if you're looking for the perfect cannoli, then we can point you in the right direction: a historic monastery in Sicily's capital.

Tucked down the echoing halls of Santa Caterina d'Alessandria in Palermo is a tiny, emblem-covered room where local pastry chefs pump out countless fresh cannoli, cakes, and cookies every day. The bakery or "dolceria" is part of a project called "I Segreti del Chiostro", which translates to "The Secrets of the Cloister." Many of Sicily's signature desserts can be traced back to cloistered nuns, who would sell sweets to aristocracy to support their monasteries. This was the case at Santa Caterina from 1311 all the way up until the 1980s, a few decades before the last nuns moved out.

The aim of I Segreti del Chiostro is to recreate the recipes of those women and keep their time-honored baking traditions alive. Everything is made fresh using ancient recipes and techniques. The bakery has become world famous since it re-opened its doors in 2019, attracting tourists, pastry chefs, and social media stars alike to try the bakery's famous cannoli.

A traditional Sicilian cannoli

When you finally make your way through the line at I Segreti del Chiostro, you'll be faced with two long counters that wrap the small room in an L-shape. This is the cannoli-making station, where multiple pastry chefs stand in a line behind towering plates of crisp, golden pastry shells and bowls of toppings like crushed pistachios, chocolate chips, and strips of candied orange. The women pipe and sugar the cannoli with military speed and precision, and the end product is a ginormous, drool-worthy dessert you can enjoy in the charming courtyard nearby.

The surroundings are as simple as the ingredients — everything in the confectionery has been preserved, from the religious iconography and marble counters to the vintage weighing scales and cookware. I Segreti del Chiostro prides itself at keeping modern technology out. It still uses the old wood-fired and gas ovens that were once manned by the nuns, and the only piece of new equipment is a mechanical dough roller. The result? Traditional Sicilian cannoli that more than live up to the hype, especially the homemade pistachio cannoli.

What to get at I Segreti del Chiostro

I sampled a chocolate chip and pistachio cannoli on a recent visit, and was blown away by both. The shell shattered upon the first bite, and the ricotta filling was perfectly creamy and balanced. It tasted light but decadent at the same time, with the orange peel providing the perfect zing to compliment the rich flavors. Everyone who was scattered across the courtyard was eating in a similar stunned silence, whether they were enjoying the cannoli or other must-try sweets like an almond and pistachio cake, Sicilian cassata, or biscotti ricci.

What's special about being able to taste these confections today is that even locals weren't always able to obtain them back in the day. The recipes were kept top secret, and usually only the wealthy could afford to buy the pastries due to the high costs of the ingredients. Though the recipes have since been published, we still don't know exactly what it is that sets I Segreti del Chiostro apart. Some pinpoint the use of local sheep milk in the filling, or the fact that the shells are fried in lard. It's probably just all of the care that goes into making each one — or maybe it's some blessing that's been passed on. In any case, these nuns were definitely doing something right.



Read More: <https://www.tastingtable.com/1984779/best-cannoli-italy-palermo-convent/>

I would like to acknowledge those who assisted and advised me, contributed articles, pictures and ideas for this quarterly *il Giornale*:

Beverly Amante, Bob Amante, Tommaso Ammazalorso, Kathy Drummond, Aldo Funai Jr., Eleanor Lillo, Joseph Scafetta Jr., Marie M. Siebeking, and Paul Siebeking.

Mostly, I am grateful for the support of *i miei amici italiani!* ~ c.s.