Scheduled OSIA’s Heritage and Cultural Events For October 2014

Sept. 24 - Capt. Kathy Mazza Lodge #2163A - Italian Heritage Night, Guest Speaker Professor Emeritus Sal LaGumina at the Bethpage Community Center, 103 Grumman Road West, Bethpage. Contact: Rose Mazza @ 516-798-6756.

Oct. 1-30th - Gabriele D’Annunzio Lodge #321 - Photo Exhibit - “The Italian Immigrants of Schenectady” at Schenectady City Hall, Jay Street, Schenectady, 9:00am-5:00pm. Contact Lodge Hall @ 518-355-7500.

Oct. 1-30th - Gabriele D’Annunzio Lodge #321 - Displays featuring Famous Italians and Italian Americans, Italian Books, and Pamphlets at Rotterdam Town Hall, Rotterdam, 9:00am-5:00pm. Contact Lodge Hall @ 518-355-7500.

Oct. 1-31st - Columbus Lodge #2143 - Display of War Heros and Famous Italian Americans at Farmingdale Public Library, 116 Merritts Road, Farmingdale. Contact: Keith Wilson @ 516-633-1435.

Oct. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 - Geneva Lodge #2397 - Italian Lessons with Professor Sebastiano Lucci at Geneva Lodge Hall, 31 Prospect Avenue, Geneva, 7:00pm. Contact: Mike Cutillo @ 315-398-1351.

continue on page 7.
It was a great weekend filled with fun and mutual concerns to help promote the positive image of Italian Americans through education. We are fortunate to have so many professional teachers in our organization. NYS CSJ Chairperson Lou Gallo is to be congratulated for co-hosting this special gathering. A special thank you to State Deputy Eleanor Jobbany for coordinating the Italian Experience event for the Grand Lodge. It was an enjoyable and busy day for those who participated in all the special festivities!

The Constantino Brumidi Lodge #2211 in Deer Park recently voted to change from an all male lodge to a co-ed lodge. On Tuesday, September 16th, a record breaking 86 ladies were welcomed into the lodge at a most impressive ceremony. Since this was such a historic event, four State Past Presidents presided over the initiation (Past President Peter Zuzolo, Past President Joseph DiTrapani, Past President Nancy DiFiore Quinn, and Past President Thoom Lupo). On behalf of the entire Grand Lodge, I congratulated both the men and women for making this decision and almost instantly increasing their membership twofold.

As I look back over the summer, I realize that the Grand Lodge happenings we were still enjoying the tremendous success of our 108th State Convention. Since that time, we have continued to be active and have kept the Order on the move!

The July 26th Plenary Session hosted in Endicott by the Duca Degli Abruzzi Lodge #443 was a busy day filled with numerous agenda items that set the pace for our upcoming year. The Plenary weekend was a huge success thanks to the warm and generous hospitality extended by President David DeAngelo and the brothers of the lodge. Special thanks to President Susan Bock and the sisters of the lodge who worked side by side with the Dukes to prepare and serve a fantastic array of food for us. Also during this weekend, the New York Grand Lodge Foundation presented a $5,000 donation to Mercy House in Endicott, New York. Mercy House is being established to provide 24-hour care to people with a terminal illness, as an alternative to a hospital, nursing home or at-home care, to restore peace and dignity to their final days. Mercy House will be located at 212 North McKinley Avenue in Endicott, the former St. Casimir’s Church building. President David DeAngelo brought this worthwhile charity to our attention and we were delighted to help out.

In addition, we had a really enjoyable evening on Saturday at the Binghamton Lodge #487. President Mark Dozoretz and the brothers of the lodge entertained us with a delicious outdoor barbecue, bocci tournament, and live entertainment. We must also thank the sisters of the Stella D’Argento Lodge for joining us at the Binghamton Lodge festivities. It was a great weekend filled with

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Both First Lady Joan and I had a fantastic evening on Friday, September 19th at the Long Island Ducks Baseball Game at Bethpage ballpark in Central Islip. Thanks to the efforts of State 2nd Vice President Robert Ferrito and his committee - “Italian Heritage Night” at the ballpark was a pleasant evening for all who attended.

Well, believe it or not, summer is behind us, and it is time to regroup with our lodge brothers and sisters and plan for the upcoming busy months. Not only will the holidays be upon us before we know it, but October (Italian Heritage & Culture Month) is just around the corner. I am hoping that you have already planned your October meeting to celebrate our shared heritage. Please make every effort to attend and or participate in a Columbus Day Parade in your district and boast proudly of your pride in being an Italian American. I invite you to join the New York Grand Lodge as we march up Fifth Avenue in the famous New York City Columbus Day Parade on Monday, October 13th. If you have never marched in this great parade - give it a try this year. I promise you a day full of enormous pride. As we move into the fall season, our OSIA activities and an extensive calendar of events begins to broaden. There will be many lodge events planned across the state and I would urge all my brothers and sisters to come together in unity as we promote the rich culture and traditions of our Italian heritage.

Joan and I will continue to attend as many lodge functions as possible. We truly appreciate the warm and friendly reception we are greeted with as we travel across this great state. Attending the many events keeps us in touch with so many of you. For us, this has always been the highlight of being the State President and First Lady. We applaud your energy, enthusiasm, and the hard work you do for the Order and your support has never gone unnoticed.

Keep up the good work - be proud of who you are and through our combined efforts we will ensure great accomplishments, strong membership gains, and peace and fraternity within your lodges. With your continued support and cooperation we cannot fail. Both First Lady Joan and I wish all of you a Happy Columbus Day 2014, and be ever so proud that we are Italian, Italian Americans - the beneficiaries of a most remarkable heritage. The many accomplishments of the Italian people in every field of endeavor have helped make America great. The outstanding efforts of New York OSIA have touched many lives, and we have every reason to be very proud.

Sempre Avanti!

Fraternally,

Joseph F. Rondinelli
State President
Grand Lodge of New York
President’s Photo Album

During the Summer Plenary Session held at the Duca Degli Abruzzi and Daughters of Columbus Lodges in Endicott, the New York Grand Lodge Foundation OSIA presented a $5,000 donation to Mercy House in Endicott, New York. Mercy House is being established to provide 24-hour care to people with a terminal illness, as an alternative to hospital, nursing home or at-home care, to restore peace and dignity to their final days. Mercy House will be located at 212 North McKinley Avenue in Endicott, NY, the former St. Casimir’s church building. In photo, NY Grand Lodge Foundation/State President Joseph Rondinelli (front 2nd from left) is shown presenting the check to Father Clarence Rumbe, Mercy House Director (3rd from left). Looking on are members of the NY Grand Lodge Executive Board and Duca Degli Abruzzi President David DeAngelo (front left).

At the September 10th meeting of the Board of Directors of the NY Grand Lodge Foundation, members took time out, to wish Past Foundation President Joseph Sciame (seated - center) a happy birthday, with a cake and wishes for cent’annì!

State President Rondinelli attended the District II Queens’ Pageant on July 20, 2014. He is shown with the newly selected 2014 Queen, Ashley McAller of the Loggia Glen Cove #1016. They are flanked by the event co-chairs - Patricia Ferrari and Gilbert DeCosimo. Ashley was selected from the six contestant representing lodges in District II that participated in the pageant.

From Your Chaplain

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

The story is told by the late author Fr. Arthur Tonne of an old woman in Ireland so poor that the parish had to pick up her bills for rent and food. This was despite the fact that her son had emigrated to the United States and had become wealthy having opened a string of grocery stores in New York City. Her friends often inquired, “Why doesn’t Bobby help his ma?”

Concerned about her the pastor dropped by one day and asked, “Mrs. O’Leary, do you ever hear from Bobby?” Proudly she told the priest, “Bobby writes me every week and always encloses a picture.” “Have you saved them?” asked the priest. “Certainly,” she said, “I put them in my bible.” The pastor examined the bible and found it stuffed with fifty pictures of Benjamin Franklin resting comfortably on $100 bills.

This story reminds us that there are treasures in our lives just waiting to be discovered and used for our benefit. One of our personal treasures is our rich cultural heritage. It is a jewel to be discovered anew in every generation; and it is our duty to make sure it is not left hidden from others like “pictures of Ben Franklin” in a bible.

Heritage Month in October is a perfect opportunity to celebrate the treasure we are as Americans of Italian descent and our influence on life in the United States and across the globe.

In our little corner on this planet, through our local, state lodge and national functions, we join millions of fellow Italian Americans across the nation in reminding the country of the gem of our ethnic legacy. I encourage each of you, even in the smallest of ways, to ensure that October is a month to remember who we are.

How can you do this? You have a story to tell! Actually you have many stories to tell your children, and your children’s children—your other family members, relatives and friends. Do not let the treasure of your culture be hidden or wasted away like money in a bible.

Each story begins with “I remember when…” Personally, I remember when we went to my paternal Sicilian grandma’s house on Sundays to pay a visit. Grandma Forno did not speak much English but would lovingly welcome us into her kitchen, serve us Italian wedding soup and just sit there with us, in her black widow’s dress with a very loving smile. Few words were exchanged due to the language barrier but much was being communicated: love, concern, compassion, happiness, to name a few.

In remembering this now I recall that experience as being the first time I was exposed to “the gift of presence”, i.e. the gift of just being present to someone with few or no words. Perhaps that is why I have been so at home for decades serving the terminally ill and dying. All you can ultimately do for them, after all, is to sit and be present as Grandma Forno did with us over Italian wedding soup.

What are your stories and how have they impacted your life? Know, too, that you are impacting the lives of those around you by sharing memories from the story of your life. As you do so be grateful for the treasure that is ours in being not only Americans of Italian descent but members of OSIA whose mission, in large part, is to never forget!

Wishing you all a fruitful autumn by the grace of God’s blessings!

Rev. R. Adam Forno,
National/NYS Chaplain

We Thank You For Your Sacrifices

Veterans Day

4 • The Golden Lion • September-October 2014
Giovanni Caboto Lodge #2372 - Bellmore. At its Scholarship Presentation Night, the lodge presented monetary awards and Medal of Excellence awards to deserving students from local High and Middle Schools. In photo, one of the recipients poses with - Lodge President Anthony Capriola, State President Joseph Rondinelli, recipient Shane Rosenthal, Shane’s Grandparents Emilia & Lucio Degrassi, and Tom Adamo.

Galileo Galilei Lodge #2253 - Hicksville. Scholarship Awards Ceremony with (from left to right) Town of Oyster Bay Town Councilman Anthony Macagnone, Nassau County Legislator Rosemarie Walker, Scholarship Recipients; Allison Bennett (for daughter Alexis Bennett not present), Toni Rose Marotti, the Dante Medal for Excellence in the Study of the Italian Language to Hicksville HS Salutatorian Alessandra Riccio, Laura DiGirolamo, Lodge President Anthony Cuccia Jr., and Hon. Rhonda E. Fischer.

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The Constantino Brumidi Lodge #2211 in Deer Park, recently reached a bench mark in their lodge history. After 45 years, lodge members voted to make the membership co-ed. On September 16th, 2014, 85 women were installed in the lodge for the first time. President Ciro Capano presided over the meeting and NYS Grand Lodge President; Joseph Rondinelli presided over the installation ceremony. Immediately following the ceremony, several newly installed women were appointed to the Board. There were approximately 150 members and dignitaries in attendance. In photo are the new Lodge Board members and other dignitaries:

Seated Left to Right: Laura Capano, Joseph Bilello, Immediate Past President-Robert Savino, Ed Valenti, Director-Bill Lamont, Carmine Soldano, President-Ciro Capano, Grand Lodge President-Joseph Rondinelli, Tom Palazzo, Carol Nani, and Rose Dispenser.

Standing Left to Right: Chaplain-Carmel Lamont, Anita Montouri, Susan Soldano, Carl DeRosa, Director-Sal Picone, Robert Lamont, Orator-Sal Favaro, 1st Vice President-Dan Cicale, Sal Pipia, 2nd Vice President-John Vigiano, Principal Trustee-Frank Montour, ack Battaglia, Director-Chris Schiavo, and Daniel Calise.

Cellini Lodge #2206 of New Hyde Park, recently held its 46th Annual Scholarship Awards Night, presenting a total of $14,000 in scholarships and awards to graduating high school students who attained the highest of academic achievements. Cellini Lodge also gives an annual award to a student of each of ten high schools in the community for excellence in Italian Language Studies. Pictured top row from the left, are: Lodge Grand Deputy Anthony D’Angelis; Michele Ment, National/State Scholarship Chair; Lodge President Vincent R. Iluzzi; Lodge Past President Angelo Ferrara and grandson Dominic. Seating, are the deserving students, from left; Lisa Marie LoPinto, Ryan Adams, Conor Cicione, Holly Fiorenti, and Ashley Liso.

Gabriele D’Annunzio Lodge #321 – Schenectady. Lodge Officers pose with the 2014 Scholarship recipients. From left: President Peter Sparano; recipient Jennifer Cerutti; Frances White, Scholarship co-chair; recipients Christina Piccirilo and Katie Shannon; and Cesare Maniccia, Scholarship co-chair.
We Will Never Forget!
Remembering 9-11-2001

The events of that day of 13 years ago shall never be forgotten and we must always remember those men, women, and children who were murdered on that horrific tragic event. We, in OSIA, will remember those hundreds of Italian Americans who lost their lives on September 11, 2001, especially the 343 NYC Firefighters, 23 NYPD Police Officers, and 37 Port Authority Police Officers, 30% of whom were Italian Americans. May their memory never fade away.

OSIA lost some of its own family … and we stop to pray for and remember:

NYC FD Firefighter John T. Vigiano
PA PD Captain Kathy Mazza Delosh
Thomas Strada
Debbie Mannetta
Rudolph Mastrocinque
NYC PD Detective Joseph V. Vigiano
Peter A. Gay
Joseph Riverso
Joseph M. Romagnolo
Frank Mancini

May They Rest In Eternal Peace!

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A Salute to Columbus
by Sal Moschella - Editor

As we are celebrating another anniversary of the discovery of America, the now annual bashing of Columbus’ achievements is in full swing. These misguided attacks fail to take into consideration the real contribution that was made by this great Italian. The “politically correct” hull, either overlooks or purposely ignores the historical fact that when Columbus discovered America, it was more than a mere opening of a new trade route. It opened the way for the European civilization, now known as Western Civilization, to migrate to the New World. Not a perfect civilization by any means, but one that had endured the test of time and world crisis. Tried and seasoned by adversities, wars, persecutions, and the dark age, the European civilization was able to survive because of its belief in the rights of man.

This concept of humanism brought forth by the Italian Renaissance, was sweeping Europe at the time of Columbus’ discovery. When it took hold in the new world, through the efforts of Filippo Mazzei, political mentor to Thomas Jefferson, this ideal was incorporated by Jefferson in the Constitution. Thus, the European culture of humanism and individualism turned into the American creed of liberty and equality, that would become instrumental in pouring the foundation for the building of a great democracy and lead to the emancipation of humanity.

This transition filtered out the religious, political, social differences, and persecutions, and, ultimately, allowed for tolerance of each other and a strong desire to live harmoniously together with other nationalities and cultures. Italians from different regions of Italy, with long standing regional animosity were united once they came to this New World. This was so because they enthusiastically embraced the American creed of democracy, made the new country their mother country and eventually animosity turned to constructive rivalry. The culture of Western Civilization, honed and refined by the ideals of the Italian Renaissance, has provided the impetus to the democratic ideology that has allowed people with a multitude of ethnic backgrounds to survive in the new country.

So let us take a moment of our lives, to give Columbus three resounding cheers for opening the door of the new world to Western Civilization and European culture. While the good and the bad came through that door, in the end, the good has survived to give this country an enduring basis for its democratic way of life.

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A Day Called . . . THEN

It’s been thirteen years since THEN.
The phoenix has arisen from the ashes,
haunted waking eyes, offspring of those
drifting in vigilant clouds.

Though days remain filled with fire
to thaw frostbitten hearts,
hourglass memories spill over
in the empty face of each new moon.

This year we remember, again,
like we did THEN . . . like we did THEN.
For all those lost and their survivors
roaming in the garden of grief -

NEVER FORGET . . . that day called THEN.

By Bob Savino - Past President Constantino Brumidi Lodge #2211

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Tickets will go on sale to the public on Friday August 29th @ 10 AM via ticketmaster.com, charge-by-phone @ 800-745-3000 or visit The Paramount Box Office (Open daily from 12 Noon - 6 PM)

more info: davisingssinatra.com

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NOVEMBER 23
THE PARAMOUNT
370 NEW YORK AVENUE, HUNTINGTON, L.I., NEW YORK 11743
PARAMOUNT.COM (631) 673-7000

THE GREAT AMERICAN SONGBOOK & AMERICA
The National Italian American Sports Hall Of Fame

In 1977, George Randazzo founded the Italian American Boxing Hall of Fame as a way to raise money for a struggling local Catholic youth program. Randazzo collected boxing photos and memorabilia, a hobby that inspired him to organize a fundraising dinner that brought together a list of boxing greats and celebrities. The dinner honored twenty-three former Italian American boxing world champions, including Rocky Graziano, Jake LaMotta, Sammy Angott, Willie Pep, and posthumously Rocky Marciano, Primo Carnera and Tony Canzoneri.

The results were so overwhelming that a friend and local businessman, Don Ponte, encouraged Randazzo to start a Hall of Fame to honor all Italian American athletes. One year later, the National Italian American Sports Hall of Fame (NIASSF) was founded as a non-profit, educational institution. The first induction ceremony and banquet was a star-studded event, as the Hall of Fame honored Lou Ambers, Eddie Arcaro, Charlie Trippi, Gino Marchetti, Dom DiMaggio and "The Yankee Clipper," Joe DiMaggio. Mrs. Virginia Lombardi also accepted the posthumous induction of her late husband, Coach Vince Lombardi.

In the years that followed, celebrities from all walks of life, including the President of the United States - Jimmy Carter, have come to the annual induction ceremonies to pay tribute to outstanding Italian American sports champions and heroes. In 1988 the Hall of Fame moved from its original headquarters in Elmwood Park to Arlington Heights.

The NIASSF enjoyed a new beginning in 1998 with the help of Phoenix Suns Chairman/CEO and eventually, as the Arizona Diamondbacks major league baseball team and a women's basketball team - Jerry Colangelo. A 1994 Inductee and Chicago Heights native, Colangelo was asked by Randazzo to serve as Chairman of an ambitious new Hall of Fame building project in the heart of Chicago's Little Italy. Colangelo accepted, and has succeeded in bringing together civic-minded men and women from across the country in support of the project. In 2000 the new facility was dedicated as "The Jerry Colangelo Center," a tribute to his efforts and leadership.

So far, more than 230 Italian-American athletes ranging from boxers Rocky Marciano and Rocky Graziano to Olympic gymnast Mary Lou Retton have been inducted and enshrined into the NIASSF. To date, the organization has raised over 6 million for scholarships and charitable causes. In 32 years, the collection of sports memorabilia the Hall has amassed is second to none. The priceless artifacts include Mario Andretti's Indy 500 racecar, Rocky Marciano's first heavyweight championship belt, Vince Lombardi's last coat worn as coach of the Green Bay Packers, swimmer Matt Biondi's Olympic Gold Medals, LaMotta's robe, Yogi Berra's New York Yankees shirt, Prime Camera's size 18 shoes, and much more memorabilia.

To this day, the National Italian American Sports Hall of Fame continues in its dedication in preserving and promoting the history and heritage of Italian Americans in sports by exhibiting and interpreting its collections for a world-wide audience, and honoring Italian American heroes who have made lasting contributions to sports and society.
On Tuesday, August 5, 2014 at Eisenhower Park, East Meadow, Long Island, State President Joseph Rondinelli and Gift of Sight Chairperson Marianne Prince O’Neil presented the keys to a brand new Ford Model 15 Seat Passenger Van to the representatives of the Helen Keller Services for the Blind to be used for the general transportation needs of their individuals who are visually impaired.

The funding for this van was raised during the recent state convention when an outpouring of love was displayed by generosity of donations from local lodges, state and national officers, personal donations and the New York Grand Lodge Foundation, Inc. Over $31,000.00 was raised to make this incredible gift a reality!!

More than 50 visually impaired and deaf/blind campers and their counselors enjoyed a fun-filled “Helen Keller Camp Day” hosted by the OSIA Gift of Sight Committee. The Campers and Staff were overwhelmed and so excited to realize that they now had a new vehicle to provide for their transportation needs.

New York OSIA and the OSIA Gift of Sight Program have been strong advocates and supporters of the Helen Keller Services for the Blind for many years and they look forward in assisting them for years to come.


August 19, 2014
Mr. Joseph F. Rondinelli
The New York State Grand Lodge Foundation,
Order Sons of Italy in America
Bellmore, NY 11710
Dear Mr. Rondinelli,

I want to thank you and The Sons of Italy for your consistent support of Camp Helen Keller throughout the years. As you know, your most recent gift in the amount of $31,485.30 was used to purchase a 15-passenger van for Camp Helen Keller, which will be utilized during the remainder of the year for client transportation and other programmatic needs. We also want to thank you for yet again sponsoring the annual Activities Day as well.

For over 61 years, Camp Helen Keller has given children and youth with vision loss the opportunity to engage in accessible physical and social activities that are critical to their development. We are able to make Camp Helen Keller a joyous and memorable experience to all who participate thanks to our supporters, including The Sons of Italy.

We remain grateful to The Sons of Italy for its continued partnership with Helen Keller Services for the Blind in service to children and youth in our communities who are visually impaired.

Sincerely,
Thomas J. Edwards
Helen Keller - Services for the Blind – President & CEO
Three new State Trustees are shown taking the Oath of Office at the opening of the session. From left: Thomas LiPuma of District V, Arthur Spera and Joanne Spera of District I. Arthur Spera was appointed State Principal Trustee.

For the Lodges’ hospitality, extended over the Plenary weekend, Lodge Presidents Susan Bock and David DeAngelo were presented Appreciation Plaques by NY Grand Lodge President Joseph Rondinelli.

On Saturday evening, the Grand Lodge officers and guests were treated to a BBQ Dinner by the members of the Binghamton Lodge #487. For their fraternal hospitality, the State President presented an Appreciation Plaque to Lodge President Mark Dozoretz.

You can never cross the ocean until you have the courage to lose sight of the shore.

Christopher Columbus
Commission For Social Justice

“Fighting Bias, Building Pride”

Louis J. Gallo Jr.

CSJ Chairman’s Message

Saluti a tutti!

As we complete the third quarter, there were enough challenges that kept us engaged and some were national in scope. During the summer I was contacted by an author, Douglas Gladstone, who wrote a book about Luigi Del Bianco, the chief carver of the figures on Mount Rushmore. He explained to me that the object of his book was to gain greater acknowledgment and recognition for Del Bianco. He was also very interested in CSJ’s involvement to do the same. We decided that the guides from the National Park Service on the Mount Rushmore tour mention Del Bianco specifically as the chief carver, and it is our interest to include a monument in his honor there. Furthermore, I contacted National CSJ President Joseph Boncore to include this in his agenda, and told him NY CSJ would greatly aid in this quest for greater recognition for Del Bianco. Hopefully we’ll get a beneficial result. It should be noted that Luigi’s grandson Louis is on a tour throughout the country drumming up petitions and making dramatic presentations in his grandfather’s garb, instructing all he comes in contact with about the exploits of his grandfather. If any of you should come in contact with a petition, show your support for this worthy endeavor by signing it. Del Bianco’s contribution once again demonstrates how Italians have contributed to the historical landscape of this country and therefore deserves the recognition that eludes him.

On another national note we were faced with an issue very negative in tone. Thanks to Board member John Fratta’s discovery on Facebook, two companies were found to manufacture defamatory T-shirts emblazoned with “Sons of Italy” on them. One was designed with a skull and two sawed-off shotguns crossed together underneath the expression, and another depicted a sleazy gangster with a machine gun underneath the same expression. Once known, our OSIA members fired off critical e-mails to these companies demanding that production and distribution of these shirts be terminated immediately. We’re also having our Counsel Mike Santo investigate trademark infringement since the expression “Sons of Italy” was emblazoned on the shirts. I want to commend all of you who responded to this issue spontaneously without our solicitation. It really demonstrated the deep pride you have in your Italian ethnicity. The companies did admit that if trademark infringement is the case, they would terminate production. We’ll have to see.

Turning closer to our home turf, we had enough to tackle. In the summer Newsday produced a seasonal ad magazine entitled “Long Island.” Perusing it I noticed that the “Suffolk Sod Father” ad was run again. This piece is produced by an Italian American landscaper who sells sod retail, but this ad uses all the offensive mafia motifs we traditionally oppose - “my competitors will swim with the fishes, all my competitors will be whacked, I’ll make you an offer you can’t refuse” - and introduces a stubby character dressed in a fedora. At our August Board meeting I presented this piece, and immediately Recording Secretary Keith Wilson and Counsel Mike Santo engaged the landscaper on the phone personally expressing their protest of the ad. The upshot was that Mike would discuss with the landscaper ways to reformulate the ad to make it less offensive to us. We await the result, of course.

No sooner than that episode we were faced with a shocking blockbuster! Frank Cicero, President of the Father Vincent Capodanno Lodge on Staten Island, called to inform me that the Borough of Staten Island was cancelling its Columbus Day parade this year and substituting an Italian culture festival instead. Immediately others in the Order heard of this development and weighed in on the issue. Since there was such a strong reaction, I decided to call an emergency meeting of the Board to discuss the issue, air out all complaints, and decide on a course of action. We decided on a 4-part ambitious plan, but upon review of our plans by President Joe and Counsel Mike Santo, it was decided to focus on part of the plan for now - a meeting with Borough President James Oddo, President Joe, and John Fratta to discuss the matter and seek a resolution. Under CSJ Letterhead I wrote a formal letter to OP Oddo requesting same, sent an e-mail personally to him for the same reason, and called his scheduler personally to set up an actual meeting date. As of this writing I am still awaiting a return call.

In the meantime State Senator Diane Savino, who serves the Staten Island borough, wrote an opinion piece in the Staten Island Advance downplaying the tradition of the Columbus Day march, which is the only tradition they are attempting to maintain. Members of the Capodanno Lodge wrote scathing e-mails critical of her stance, and I encouraged our Rapid Response Team to do the same and some have already done so. We hope Senator Savino comes to her senses, converts, and becomes an ally with us to re-instate this parade! We’ll keep you posted.

Personally, I want to thank and commend Frank Cicero and members of the Capodanno Lodge for their concern and interest as our infantrymen on the spot on this matter. We all must stand behind them as dedicated brothers and sisters and see to it that a tradition they have always enjoyed is maintained! Stay tuned for further developments, and if you can lend a hand, please do so!

On a more positive note, I am still dedicated to creating a strong statewide organization at the grass roots. In July I traveled to District 7 and had two meetings with the lodge presidents, liaisons, and state trustees encouraging them to select liaisons from each lodge. Although wide distances fracture this district, they said they could still create strong communications amongst them all and remain in the loop. Some Board members who were there and also attended these meetings were very helpful in offering their advice and suggestions to make this district strong.

In August I traveled to District 8 and was greeted by a large contingent which was very interested in what I had to say about organization. In addition, we discussed issues endemic to this district and began some preliminary plans to address them. We are going to try to introduce Italian in Odyssey High School in Greece since there is evidence of strong parental and student demand for it there. Casa Italiana, the Italian Culture Center at Nazareth College in Pittsford, is threatened with extinction due to financial constraints. Two teachers from Greece, Lino Pizzolanti and Ida Wilder, who attended the meeting, will help us in this regard. Consequently, in the first year of my tenure I have visited all districts in the Order located in NY State, now and will begin my rounds again.

Keeping a vigilant eye right now on our upcoming Italian Heritage and Culture Month in October, Board member Liz Rizzo has written to all public libraries on Long Island urging them to celebrate this October month with Italian culture programs. We will also send e-mails to all other statewide libraries and encourage them to do the same. Already we see some notable results. District CSJ Chairmen and respective Lodge Liaisons, please take heed and follow through! Make sure your district libraries are doing something in this manner! If we press on, it will be quite a month!

Lastly, one bitter and one sweet note must be mentioned. Board member Rocco Lanzillotta has had to resign from the Board because of an immediate job transfer to New England with Liberty Travel. It’s a fabulous opportunity for him, and we wish him all the best, but we will miss him terribly! He was so creative, committed, and witty that he lent a tremendous array of ideas for us to pursue, and believe me I have recorded them for future review. Buona Fortuna Rocco! The sweet note is that Board member John Fratta has been appointed National CSJ Vice-President at the August National Plenary session. I am ecstatic because his appointment is not only so well-deserved but it also gives us a direct line to the National CSJ! I have already forwarded to John my suggestions for National’s agenda (as I did also for new National CSJ President Joseph Boncore), and of course NYS CSJ will be a committed partner and helpful satellite. Buona Fortuna John!

SEMPRE AVANTI!!

Lou

The NYS Commission for Social Justice (CSJ) of OSIA sponsored an Italian Culture Festival recently at the Smithtown Historical Society Fairgrounds in Smithtown. Approximately 1,500 attendees took advantage of a smorgasbord of Italian culture including food and craft vendors, Italian music, an Italian car show, and presenters on Italian experiences, architecture, poetry, and immigration. A ribbon cutting opened the festival with members of the Festival Committee and local elected officials. From left to right: District 1 CSJ Chairman Charles Lucie, Luisa Potenza, Thomas Bandise, Past National and State OSIA President Peter Zuzolo, OSIA State President Joseph Rondinei, NYS CSJ Chairman, and Event Chairman Louis Callo, Smithtown Supervisor Patrick Vecchio, Past OSIA State President Salvatore Lanzillotta, Anthony Rotoli, Gene DeMaria, Assemblyman Michael Fitzpatrick, Diana Grauer, and County Legislator Robert Trotta.
The Garage Sales

I stop for garage sales. You never know what treasures await among someone’s household discards that are strewn on the driveway. Most sales have the usual items - books, faded clothes, granny-crocheted blankets, picture frames, children’s equipment, etc. When you see a pizelle maker, Capodimonte porcelain roses, or an espresso pot, you know the sellers are of Italian heritage. Who else would be selling a sparkly souvenir Venetian gondola that lights up, embroidered napkins, opera LPs, and offer you cookies as you browse?

I see depression glass, tarnished silver trays (once wedding gifts that no one wants to polish now), a pasta maker, demitasse spoons, tablecloths, and other familiar items. I walk around and I keep thinking - “We had one of those years ago!” “I wonder what happened to it?” Then, “I wonder who in the family has it!”

Buying used stuff may be abhorrent to some people, but garage sales are different. It’s the thrill of the hunt for a bargain. You want to find something that may be so valuable that you dream it will have to be appraised on Antiques Road Show.

My fantasy is to find a Gucci handbag with some old Roman coins in it, or even better, a dusty framed drawing carried from Italy by a great grandmother years ago. If the attic rejects turns out to be a Rafaelle sketch, the art historians would really have to be called in to evaluate that! So I search and I search, chat with the garage sale hosts and make new friends.

The best outdoor market and prototype for our personal mini flea markets is the Sunday tradition for Romans to scout the stalls along the Tiber River. You can find anything from authentic antiques to questionable items sold by gypsies. Tourists love to explore there too. I bought a new coat there for $8 a while ago. When I paid, the vendor said “Quest’ e un regalo Signora.”

I still get compliments when I wear my bargain green and grey wool coat from Rome’s Porta Portese.

A few weeks ago a friend looked into my breakfast and surveyed the crystal bowls, vases, candlesticks and my souvenir caretto. (It seems to be obligatory to have a Sicilian donkey cart replica in your home or business if your family’s roots are from that memorable far away island.

“My kids are going to have a great garage sale some day” my friend said. That statement changed my thinking. I emphatically decided to use all the glassware and serving pieces I had been saving for company. If anything breaks - who cares?

What I think of as heirlooms my family thinks of as junk anyway.

Actually I don’t care what they sell. I do have a message for my family though - “Ditch the Lenox but keep the Sicilian donkey cart, please.”

Florence is a Past President of the Giovanni Ciboto Lodge #237, and a member of the OSU Scholarship Committee. Flo is the author of “The Scent of Jasmine - Vignettes from a Sicilian Heritage.” She has studied in Italy under Fulbright and NYS Teacher Grants.

This column is going to be a little different than most of the others I have written over the years for “The Golden Lion” because rather than telling you a story, this one is going to be about getting you to tell yours.

Hopefully, at least.

I am reminded of this as we prep in our lodge for October’s Culture and Heritage observances. Our committee here is putting together a wonderful slate of activities to honor our incredible heritage, and one of the things we are attempting to do is to get folks to fill out a form with a bit of family history. We will gather those forms and put them into some kind of commemorative archive, the exact details of which we have not yet determined.

It could be on computer files. It could be in a binder. It could be in book form.

The point is that we need to preserve not only our history but our stories. Whether you are three or four generations removed from the Old Country or were born there and came to America, you all have amazing and fun family stories to tell and to remember. And if you don’t put those memories somewhere now, there is a chance they may one day be lost.

OK, I lied. I will tell a little bit of a story.

The last time I was in the Old Country with my dad, who was born there, and his brother, who still lives there, I spent a number of afternoons “inter-viewing” them, learning family names and histories and stories. Of course, we conducted those sessions over glasses of wine filled with chopped-up peaches -- a summertime tradition in our family.

I learned so much and was generally just thrilled to spend such quality time with my papa’ and my zio. The thing was, though, that we did not get through ALL the family history in the short vacation time that I had there. So what I did, when it was time for me to return to America, was leave my digital audio recorder with them, and I asked them -- in my absence -- to continue with those afternoon conversations, under the apricot trees and grape vines of my uncle’s property, even without me. I wanted them to continue to tell stories about themselves growing up and their family and their village.

The funniest scene, probably, was me showing two men in their 80s how to use a new-fangled gadget such as a digital voice recorder. I really had no grand illusions that they would follow through with this plan, but I was hopeful -- and you know the saying about if there is hope …

When my dad returned to America after another couple of weeks, I couldn’t wait to ask him if he had remembered the recorder, though I was quite sure the answer would be no. To my surprise, he handed it to me, and he said, “I hope you enjoy our conversations.”

Lo and behold, the two older gents had, indeed, recalled how to turn it on and off. They recorded four conversations -- over two hours’ worth -- of family memories and stories. That their conversation is totally in Italian is a bonus for me because when I listen to those snippets I feel like I am right there under the apricot trees with them.

I have transcribed the conversations -- as best I can with my somewhat limited knowledge of Italian -- and I have used some of them to write a little bit of family history. I also have saved them so that every now and then, I can pull that device out and listen to my dad and his brother reminisce about their lives.

Of course, I have a glass of wine with peaches while I do that. You should do the same. Preserve those memories. They are special.

Mike Cutillo is President of Geneva Lodge 2397 in upstate New York. He is the Executive Editor of the Finger Lakes Times daily newspaper and can be reached at mcutillo1@rochester.rr.com.

The 2014 November-December issue of the Golden Lion will be the Christmas edition and will include the Annual Christmas wishes and messages. Lodges, individual members, and anyone else interested are urged to participate in this display of holiday fraternalism.

For additional information please contact Anita Rosato at 631-271-1272 or the Grand Lodge Office at 516-785-4623.


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*Get More Out Of Your Membership
Join a Committee In Your Lodge*

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Membership 2014
New members initiated as of August 31, 2014

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**Columbus Lodge #2143 - Farmingdale**, On July 9, 2014, another three new members - Joseph D’Antonio, Angelo Di Leonardo, and Claus D. Bekiers (holding certificates) - joined the ranks of the Lodge and the Order. They are flanked by, from left: Membership co-chair Charles DiPrima; Lodge President Philip Guerrieri; and membership co-chair/Past President Keith Wilson.
State/National Events

2014

Oct. 12 - NYOSIA Long Island Sons of Italy Columbus Day Parade to be held on Main Street in Huntington, 9:30am Breakfast, 12:30pm Parade Kick-Off. Contact: Keith Wilson @ 516-633-1435.

Oct. 14 - NYOSIA Annual Golf Outing at Town of Oyster Bay Golf Course honoring Anthony C. Naccarato, Marianna Principe O’Neil, Nancy DiF Fiore Quinn and Keith Wilson, $75 Per Golfer, $75 Dinner only at the Woodbury Country Club. Contact: Robert Ferito @ 917-440-5435.

Oct. 25 - NYOSIA Fall Plenary Session to be hosted by St. Francis of Assisi Lodge #2629, Frank B. Licata Lodge #2435, Joe Di Maggio Lodge #2284 at the Knights of Columbus Lodge Hall, 25 Townsend Road, Beacon. Contact: Eileen Stavis @ 516-785-4632.

Nov. 1 - NYOSIA GMM Fundraiser Brunch at LiGreci’s Staaten, Staten Island honoring Outgoing Chairperson Keith Wilson, Outgoing Commissioners Rose Friarina, Stanley Klein, John Matura, Elyane Marga, Special Recognition to Gina Ferrara, 11:00am. Contact: Frances Cicero @ 716-273-8741.

Nov. 22 - NYOSIA Gift of Sight Annual Awards Luncheon honoring Dr. Gerard D’Aversa and Brian Pearce (Ret.) to be held at the Immaculate Conception Center, Douglaston, 12:00pm. Contact: Marianne Principe O’Neil @ 516-883-5762.

Nov. 30 - NYOSIA Christmas Concert featuring International Vocal Artist Giada Valenti at Molloy College, Rockville Centre. More info to follow. Contact: Robert Ferito @ 917-440-5435.

2015

Jan. 30 - NYOSIA 22nd Anniversary Winter Charity Ball to be held at the Chateau Briand, Carle Place, 7:30pm. Contact: Joan Rodinelli @ 516-799-0044, Annette Lanewkeski @ 516-933-7393 or Madeline Matteucci @ 631-654-2578.

Jan. 31 - NYOSIA Winter Plenary Session to be hosted by John Michael Marino Lodge #1389 at the Washington Senior Center, Pt. Washington. Contact: Eileen Stavis @ 516-785-4632.

Apr. 7 - NYOSIA Grand Lodge Foundation Annual Cooley’s Anemia Dine-A-Round at Verdi’s of Westbury, 7:00pm. Contact: Mary Naccarato @ 516-921-7389 or Mildred Mancusi @ 516-359-1745.

Apr. 24 - NYOSIA Grand Lodge Foundation 33rd Anniversary Golden Lion Awards Gala at the Garden City Hotel, Garden City, 7:00pm. Contact: Carol DiTrapani or Eileen Stavis @ 516-785-4632.

May 17 - NYOSIA Special Breakfast Tribute in honor of First Lady Joan Rodinelli at the Chateau Briand, Carle Place, 9:00am. Contact: Barbara Lupi @ 631-981-5193, Rae Lanzilotta @ 516-334-0830 or Madeline Matteucci @ 631-654-2578.

May 28-31st - NYOSIA 109th Annual State Convention to be held at the Villa Roma Resort & Conference Center, Callicoon. Contact: Carol DiTrapani @ 516-785-4623 or Annette Lanewkeski @ 516-933-7393
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To my Brothers and Sisters at the
Order Sons of Italy in America

As a proud member,
I would like to take the time
to celebrate and recognize the
countless contributions
made by the Italian community.

Best wishes
as we celebrate our heritage.

Congratulations to all my
OSIA Brothers & Sisters
As we celebrate
Italian American Heritage & Culture
during the month of October
Buona Fortuna!

James Altadonna Jr.
OYSTER BAY TOWN CLERK
And Proud Member of Columbus Lodge #2143

Best Wishes
Italian Heritage Month

Supervisor Kate Murray
Town of Hempstead
516-489-6000

Celebrating Italian Culture and Heritage Month
NY STATE COMPTROLLER
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Salutes

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2014